



# KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2012

Hi Everyone,

## Career Students Programme

Since informing you about our new Career Students Programme we have had a very interesting time. We never realized what a lucrative business charity was, particularly for the middle man! After participating in 3 lessons on the net with Global Giving and finding out all the ins and outs of how it works we have decided that it will not achieve what we were hoping for ie widening our audience. They say sites only draw in 2 or 3 unknown donors and you have to use your own network of family and friends then pay 15% of the donations to them. One way you can help: please spread the word around your social and workplace networks, send me the people's emails if they are interested and I can include them on our mailing list or forward them the newsletters yourself and we can grow from there.

Therefore, to the kind people out there who have expressed an interest in becoming involved in the project we are reverting back to the original payment options:

If we all join together we will be able to reach the \$3,000 needed for **Stage I**.

Donations may be sent in two ways:

1) an Australian bank account

Bank: Commonwealth Bank  
Account Name: Kep Gardens  
BSB: 06 5116  
Account No: 10158168

Please use "student" as the subject when you transfer.

2) Paypal account which can be found on our website [www.kepgardens.com](http://www.kepgardens.com).

Once again, please use "student" as the subject when you transfer.

Student thank yous and monthly reports will be sent to all donors to follow their progress.

A very big thank you to those who have already donated through the above methods.

We will still put it on the Global Giving site because for United States friends any donations are tax deductible as an added incentive.

We are meeting with Sunrise Orphanages at the end of this month (Geraldine Cox – I am sure you have seen her on the TV in Australia). They approached us as they had heard of our good work. They are attempting to incorporate into their site other Australian organizations in Cambodia and any donations to us will be tax deductible. But, of course, this will take time to set up so won't be much help for Australian donors this time but hopefully donations in the future will include the added incentive tax wise.

Meanwhile, the Career Students Programme is running smoothly. The students and teachers have not missed a night in the 6 weeks it has been running – 6 days a week and are working very hard. They are determined to pass with high grades to ensure they can continue studying. The teachers are really putting in too which is good to see, often staying longer to help an individual student.



You will notice in the photos that there are 5 students. We allow 2 others who have attended English class for a few years to participate in the classes. One we will not sponsor as his family has the means to support him. The other boy we are considering at the moment, checking out information that originally was muddled. If we include him I will send you his details but it will not affect the cost of Stage I. Obviously, it will add to Stage II which comes into effect next year.



Savry and Sreyleap



Barang and Boyean



Tann and Barang

As usual though, anything you try in this country shows up a huge need. Many, many Year 12 students have come to see us asking if they can attend the classes. Due to the lack of schools,

teachers and resources the level of education in rural Cambodia is of a poor standard and most have no hope of passing or passing well enough to continue studying if they don't pay for private lessons. Our classes will go for 9 months with a month in Kampot before the exams. In the high school the teachers we interviewed said they only give private classes for 3 months. We felt really bad saying no but if the classes become too big we would be defeating our purpose – the individual time given to each student to ensure they pass. Something to think about for future years but I guess you can't help everyone just be happy with achieving success for some.

We are reproducing two references that we needed for Global Giving from totally independent people. We thought that for those of you who have not been here to see firsthand what we do independent recommendations might assist you with your thinking.

October 12, 2012

To: Global Giving

Re: Letter of reference for **Kep Gardens Association**

I am writing in reference to Kep Gardens Association, which is planning to post a project on Global Giving.

I have been working and living in Cambodia for the past 16 years, the last 11 in Kep Province. I worked for 6 years. After our final project, the Community Legal Education Center, was transferred to Cambodian management, I retired and moved to Kep. I have been a volunteer English teacher for monks at 2 Buddhist wats and for several groups of young civil service personnel.

When I moved to Kep in 2001, there were almost no foreign language education or vocational training opportunities for children and young people in Kep, particularly young people from poor rural subsistence farming and fishing families. This resulted in very little in the way of employment opportunities by which they could earn a sustainable living and help their families improve their living standards. As Kep has been developing economically over the past decade, with a rapidly expanding tourism sector, the need for young people to acquire language and vocational skills has become critical.

I became acquainted with Janine and Andrew Judd and their work at Kep Gardens about 3 years ago. They are actively committed to providing the young people from the villages around Kep Gardens with opportunities to develop their skills through language,

educational support and vocational training. They have very sensibly developed projects at Kep Gardens based on the assessed needs of the village families and individual students and which are suited to the local environment and developmental progress. They and the Kep Garden staff then work diligently to ensure that a project is solidly established and stabilized before moving on to the next stage or initiating a new project.

Kep Gardens is one of the few organizations that provide free English language, hospitality services, vocational skills and agricultural training to children of rural village families in the area. For each young person participating in one or more of the Kep Gardens projects, this means an opportunity for a future they could otherwise only dream about – to become employable, make a decent living and develop their interests and potential. Kep Gardens has a positive impact, not just on the individual young people, but on their families and their local communities.

It is very difficult to fund and operate a small scale, local organization like Kep Gardens. Most donors emphasize broad programs on a regional or national scale and remain largely urban-based. That typically results in very little benefit trickling down to the 80% of Cambodians living in rural areas.

The work of Kep Gardens, on the other hand, focuses on the positive impact on the present and futures of the individual young rural people, their families and their villages.

Janet K. King  
Resident, Kep Village  
Kep Province, Cambodia

-----  
29 Sacramento St #2  
Cambridge  
MA 02138

10/12/2012

To whom it may concern,

I first encountered Kep Gardens in early 2012 on a trip studying the work of non-profit organizations in Cambodia. Of all the organizations we surveyed, Kep Gardens stood out for its integration with the community, its flexible and holistic approach, and the dedication of its staff to realizing its vision: bringing education to Cambodia's most vulnerable youths.

Kep Gardens is a response to the most pressing development need in rural Cambodia: the absence of the knowledge, skills and contacts that would allow local people to benefit from the dollars flowing into

the region. Through free training in English, hospitality, and other practical skills, the children in the community served by Kep Gardens are able to access the industries that provide the greatest opportunities in Cambodia today.

Achieving these goals in the rural communities of Cambodia—in the context of extreme poverty, disease and a wide range of development issues—requires more than just running classes. This reality is reflected by Kep Gardens' flexible, holistic approach to education and community development. Kep Gardens' work has expanded to provide everything from life skills as basic as oral hygiene; accommodation for at-risk female students; access to modern medical care; and new agricultural and construction techniques to local workers.

This ability to closely adapt to community needs as they arise has allowed Kep Gardens to become a trusted and respected institution. Locals regard it as a life-changing project that can, in the long-term, transform this disadvantaged and disconnected part of the world.

I strongly believe in the value of Kep Gardens' work and cannot provide firmer endorsement for sponsorship.

Reuben Finighan

Fulbright Scholar  
Frank Knox Fellow  
Harvard Kennedy School  
Master of Public Policy candidate

What a saga with Nieu's father's leg! As it didn't seem to be healing fast enough we took him to a new private hospital recently opened outside of Kampot. There are European and Khmer doctors. This German lady doctor that we saw is an amazing woman. She spoke four languages fluently while we were in the room and upon enquiring she said that she spoke 5 well. It appears that from his rice wine drinking his liver is no good and all the vitamins etc that we need to heal wounds the liver is destroying. (This is my simplistic layman's view). So she spoke sternly in Khmer to him about his drinking and dosed him up with vitamins and other stuff. Andrew took him back the second time and everything was going well. Then he went a bit wobbly, missed the next appointment but it has nearly closed over so we have to get him back on track and take him again to close this chapter. I guess he has come a long way from having to have his leg chopped off at the knee according to the local clinic but it has not been without a few interesting moments.

## Trades Training Programme

The Trades Training Programme operates under the Kep Gardens Association banner as “Quality Building and Engineering Services” or QBES. QBES offers renovations and repairs in all aspects of construction but particularly in electrical and plumbing work. We have recently expanded our programme adding repairs and servicing to refrigerators and freezers.

The idea was quite simple. I would participate in the work and training, local businesses would support our programme, Kep Gardens could earn income and we could train young people in trades. In the provinces, skilled and competent tradesmen do not exist and there is a huge demand for training in these areas.

Not so simple. The words “straight, level, flat, square, clean, neat, tidy” whilst existing in the Khmer language are rarely spoken or understood in daily life. Additional words or phrases that come to mind are “prompt, working alone (this is impossible), reliability, responsibility and thinking ahead”. So who’s being trained ie train the trainer. Yep, it’s me and yes we are getting there.

We started from the most basic level imaginable like: what tool is used for what; work on a bench don’t sit in the dirt; wear jocks particularly if you are wearing your father’s big trousers cut off just below groin level; switch the power cable not the neutral cable; terminate all unused live wires; use cable joiner, insulation tape, soldering iron; PVC primer and glue; 200mm out of square over 3 metres is not acceptable; painting a wall does not include the chickens and dog (yes, it actually happened).

I must not lose my temper, I must spend enough amounts of time discussing miniscular issues, I am not allowed to become frustrated, give up, walk out or get drunk. Rework is a way of life. I must not shout or demand it is done right the first time. For those of you who know me well know I do all these things without fail (bull \*\*\*\*)!

But nevertheless we are progressing, we have a lot of work and a sense of pride is building within the blokes and we are gaining a good reputation.

Anyway, back to work. Thanks for the opportunity to share this with you.

Best regards,  
Andrew or “scoot” a Khmer word meaning Crazy.



The “Boys”



Raim and Huch



Toll

## English School

As usual we had to knock back a lot of students at the beginning of October when we started the new year. I hate this part. First couple of weeks always messy with new people learning the rules eg no dropping rubbish, use the bin; no taking fruit off the trees; don’t steal the marbles, put them back; respect Kep Gardens property. All

settled down now and the sound of laughter and kids having fun fills the air.

We employed a Khmer English teacher for 2 hours a week for the Upper class to teach grammar. A huge gap in ability in this class and I know some of them don't understand the harder grammar in English. He has worked very hard by himself at his English and his pronunciation is very good. Hopefully we can use him more in the future after he gets back from a 2 month teacher training course in America which he applied for and was successful.

Looking forward to a few visitors from Australia in the next month or so and then the middle of January the first two volunteers from BeMore arrive. They won't be living here as we don't have room at the moment for long term stays but hopefully they will inject some different skills for the kids to widen their experience of life. We relate it all back to English – like with the swimming lessons we then learnt all the beach words and the children could understand because they had been there and seen it and could draw pictures of the words.

Finally got some new glasses. The others were so badly scratched that I could hardly see out of them. A whole new world opened up when I got new ones!! Probably why I noticed the ants below at night.



One night the ants were on the march. At home when the ants are marching we always say it is going to rain. Same here in Cambodia but not just a single line like you might see but it stretched for metres and metres and metres and was very wide. They were coming out of the jungle and heading for somewhere dry and sure enough, it poured later that night.

At the moment we have so many passion fruit which suits me because I love them. We have 6 vines which we are continually cutting back from the trees, they are going wild and threatening to take over. It's all the water. It is getting on towards the end of November and we are still getting quite large rainfalls mainly of a night. Usually October is very dry here and we only get the odd shower until April/May. But not this year.

Good though because everything is still lovely and green.



I had to laugh the other night. I was grappling with setting up the Career Students page on a website. As I am computer illiterate this was not an easy task for me. A huge preying mantis flew in the window and landed on the computer. The cat came flying over my shoulder to eat it, landed on the computer, totally froze everything. I chucked the cat off and picked up the insect which then bit me. A perfect example of nearly everything you try to do here, it is not easy, takes twice as long as it should but not without its funny side either.

In the last newsletter when I was thanking people I forgot to mention Ulla Lundstrom. We sent some Kampot pepper over to Sweden which got crushed on the way and the bags broke so Ulla repacked them all for us and sold them to her friends. Thank you very much Ulla for the much needed funds you collected and all the extra work you had to do.

Thank you also to the people that went onto the Kep Gardens Facebook and clicked "like". I got the information I was after, not sure what to do with it but it satisfied my curiosity.

Thank you very much to the Whalley family who periodically send over a box of books for the library from England. The passionate readers love to see new books arrive as they have looked through or read most of the old ones. The staff enjoy the new books too, especially Nieu who runs the library as she spends most of the afternoon reading while supervising the library. So thanks to you all for supporting the students' library.



When people are coming over they often ask what they can bring. A visitor suggested that I put a list at the end of each newsletter which I thought was a good idea:

coloured pencils, stickers (animals, transport, food but we need at least 90 of the same sticker), picture dictionaries, marbles, skipping ropes, volleyball net (cheap net of some sort), water color paints and brushes, small wipe-off boards, balls (can inflate here), vegetable seeds, cotton hand towels, lightweight kids school bags, to keep out moisture ziplocks and lock type plastic containers are great, jigsaws for the children and educational jigsaws, medium length thick black shoelaces and thick work socks for Andrew to wear with his boots, sharpener (the sort you screw onto a bench), English readers and books for young learners, good quality hand tools for maintenance purposes.

A lot of these bits and pieces can be bought from a "Cheap as Chips" type store. If you are thinking of visiting, a couple of these things that you can fit into your suitcase would be greatly appreciated.

Not long before Christmas. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas with your family and friends and hope that 2013 brings you health, happiness and contentment.

Cheers,  
Janine and Andrew