

Hi Everyone,

The last 3 months are been fairly routine, getting on with normal business but interspersed with a few highlights to feed our enthusiasm.



Simple things please simple people so a highlight of mine was my new shopping basket. I must share it with you. Keat, our Khmer cultural crafts lady made it for me. I love it!! It's made from palm leaf, very strong and I can fit all the shopping.

## Career Students

Our nursing students are still waiting for the national registration exam which is scheduled around the end of March.

The great news for Baraing, our engineering student, is that a huge supporter and friend, Jan, found an internship for him. He is working with a Cambodian architect/engineer who has had his own business for 25 years, knows what is needed to help Baraing with his thesis and is very supportive and enthusiastic about helping a young Cambodian find his way forward in his career.



**WELL DONE  
BARAING**

Andrew keeps in contact with Mr Tan and reports he is very happy with Baraing who he says is working hard. A very good result all round. Baraing deserves to do well as he has beaten the odds - going to a school in Phnom Penh with no friend as support and having to learn French and English in order to understand lectures.

*Thanks to Arek, a Polish friend in Kep we now have wifi when the generator is on. Good strength, fast and efficient. We are happy with this but once the power comes through the area we will be in seventh heaven.*

## Annual Debate

We held our annual debate with the Buddhist Library recently. We first hold 4 or 5 debates with all students from Class 6 participating. The students suggest many topics, we vote on them and the most popular are used for the debates within Kep Gardens. We then pass these 5 topics to the Buddhist Library who choose the two topics that we will debate with their students. The result was 1-1, a very fitting end to the afternoon as all try their best but most importantly all are gaining self-confidence public speaking.



Tithaka, Soyin and Chanseyhak



Vuh, Chanloun and Kunthea



Kep Gardens and Buddhist Library teams



Judges: KP and Vicky



Thanks to Vicky for preparing the marking sheet. Thanks KP and Vicky for doing the hard job of judging the debates.

### **Leadership Through English Youth Group**

Our youth group has been working on a project to supply village homes with bins and organizing rubbish pickups. We are very proud of them as they have done this all on their own, working with City Hall. Thank you to Vuh and Kimhean for representing the youth group. They are awaiting the answer from the Kep City Governor. This will be a huge achievement if they are successful. City Hall says it is the first time a village has requested environmental help and we believe, it is the first time youth have been the instigators proving to the community that it is possible to make changes. Kep is attempting to become a green tourism city with solar and wind street lighting so they just might run with it. Let's hope so.



We have quite a large group of Years 10 and 11 this year. The Year 12 students run the meetings and sports programme. Encouraging to observe the fruits of our labour, instilling confidence, thinking, perseverance and teamwork coming to fruition.

### **No Plastic Logo Competition**

In conjunction with our healthy food, no plastic canteen and our youth group project, Andrew suggested a No Plastic Logo Competition. The youth group arranged for the entries and Andrew was the judge. Two younger children won and we will use their ideas to promote Kep Gardens activities in this area. They both won a voucher to spend at the school canteen.



Kanya



Sopith

### **Parent Workshop**

Another encouraging happening was a large group of parents attending our workshop on "Tips to Help Your Children Read". 30 families were represented, many of them fathers. Sarak spoke to the parents and we had prepared booklets for participants. All agreed they wanted to come back in a month's time after they had had time to practice and could talk about their experiences together.



Took this picture early, for most of the session, the desks were full.

A very interesting observation: Health workshops for the community do not bring anywhere near the amount of people as the workshops for parents and how they can help their children. We have held two very successful sessions. We will work on other topics for the future as they are obviously valued and needed by the parents. They have unconsciously set up their own support group by asking to meet again to share experiences.

### **Film Night**

We also held a film night recently. Showed Shrek for the younger children followed by a Khmer film made by a Conservation of Flora and Fauna group in Cambodia. Spoken in Khmer it showed beautiful scenery, animals in their natural habitat and asked people to stop some of the old practices to conserve the environment. Great travel film actually if wondering where to visit while in Cambodia.

### **Volunteers**

Five Spanish volunteers have just left Kep Gardens. We will miss them. They were lovely people, worked hard, got on well with everyone, become involved with the staff and school community - in other words perfect volunteers. All have just become doctors and we wish them well in their future careers.



Araceli



Cristina



Juan



Miriam



Teresa



## **Sports Day**

Thanks to Bunngim and Phanny, the sports programme organizers on the leadership team, for organizing a 3 school sports day at Kep Gardens last weekend. The 3 schools will meet at Kep Gardens once a month. Thanks to Martin for mowing the large football field with his ride on mower. Helped us greatly timewise. Our older football team was successful but the younger team came up against much older boys. Not sure if it is good experience to be beaten so soundly!! Our girls weren't scheduled to play volleyball this time. Good to see half of the area at Kep Gardens filled with young people playing sport early on a Sunday morning to beat the heat.



## **Accident**

Just missed our gate! Lots of earth moving going on down our road, backwards and forwards all day and night, dusty, noisy horns to let students know they are coming (this is a good thing). But no brakes, thankfully on a Saturday, no students going in and out the gate.



## **Volunteer Experience**

How things change! From a chicken house, to a mess hut and now we have turned it into two units with ensuite bathrooms for volunteers and other guests. They haven't been finished yet but our 5 Spanish volunteers were the first occupants of Unit 1 and were more than happy even though we hadn't painted the inside and outside.



## **Next Generation of Students**



Rim, one of our staff has had a beautiful baby girl as had Dany, one of our ex-students. New generation of Kep Gardens' students starting Playgroup in about 3 years time!!

We hope everyone is healthy and happy and enjoying life. Cheers, Janine and Andrew

The fruits of 10 years work are now being reflected through the youth programme and parent workshops with the initiation of their own programmes to help and support the community. Although a slow but rewarding process, none of this could have been achieved without your financial support. We have our supporters to thank for this and ask that you introduce Kep Gardens to others.

Don't forget, tax deductible donations can be paid through GDG Project J674N.



Proud to partner with Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993) for project J674N.



## DAILY LIFE AT THE GARDENS

Vicky and Ian have introduced a new concept at Kep Gardens, "The Month That Was". During their breaks they wander around taking photos and at the end of the month enlarge a dozen or so of the better ones, laminate them, display them in the library and the students take them home a month later. I thought it may be an idea for the newsletter but call it "Daily Life at The Gardens". Photographs are a much nicer way to show what has been happening, rather than talking.



Refilling the bird feeder



Co-ordination exercises



Arriving at school drenched



Love my one-on-one time



Family off home after playgroup



Rain won't stop us from playing!



Can I see a bee?



Not gambling I hope?



Class 6



Flying fox fun



Volunteers Miriam and Teresa



Julie and Peter Cooper about to leave, thanking staff who looked after them.  
Mr Choun, Choun and Pov in orange.