



KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2020

Hi Everyone,

We hope that you are safe and well and that you and your family survived the first wave of the virus and lockdown. Now we are all bracing for the second wave. Please look after yourselves and keep safe.

Here in Cambodia we only have 129 cases and no deaths. In the beginning people were very cautious but now people are starting to congregate in large groups and the numbers are rising albeit very slowly. The schools were closed on 16th March and recently the Government said they will not open until the end of the year.

Since May, they are allowing small groups of 10 or less to have lessons as long as safe distancing rules are followed. Consequently, we hold 3 lessons every afternoon to cater for the oldest class. We chose this class as many of them will be applying for jobs or university places once they sit their Year 12 exams and we wanted to keep up their English speaking and listening for interviews. We cannot hold classes in the morning as the younger classes would be impossible to practice social distancing and the older classes are doing online learning. As usual the students from poor families suffer as they do not have phones or computers to do these lessons. The Government also put classes on a TV Channel but people in the provinces need to have a satellite dish to be able to get this channel and it costs \$85 which is out of the question for the majority of families. Once again, the wealthy have the advantage. This is one reason why associations like Kep Gardens are so needed in the rural areas, offering free classes to give all students equal opportunity. It is one reason why donations are so vital to keep us and other grassroots organizations like ourselves alive.

Volunteers

Consequently, we have not had any volunteers. I am attaching a photo of Kazim, our last volunteer, a lovely, caring man. The Government has imposed restrictions on incoming foreigners: \$50,000 worth of health insurance, \$3,000 cash to be given on arrival to cover testing, quarantine, hospitalization if necessary and a clear health report done no longer than 72 hours prior to arrival. As the majority of our volunteers are young students, I am not anticipating an influx of interest with these restrictions!!!! I tend to think they will be relaxed when tourist numbers are down as many jobs rely on the tourist industry. We will have to wait and see.



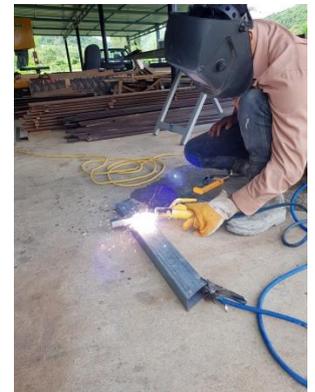
Kazim

VOCATIONAL TRADE CENTRE

A very busy and rewarding time for the trade centre! The staff have still been working with Andrew as it is quite easy to enforce social distancing and take temperatures every morning plus they have families to feed and need to work. They are the lucky ones.

Welding Course

An advanced welding course in both arc and oxy acetylene fusion welding raised two of our apprentices to the professional level. Their work is much appreciated by our recent clients.



Construction Job

Work continues on a traditional Khmer house which has provided many opportunities to pass on skills in wood machining and fixing. Our sincere thanks to Tonie for this work opportunity.



Car Trailer

A joint training effort involving all staff resulted in the manufacture of our first 500kg capacity car trailer of which all of us are very proud. The trailer has since been bought by our good friend, Martin, to transport his ride-on mower. We look forward to receiving further orders. Happy trailering Martin!!



New Apprentices

Two new apprentices have commenced with our school, Roy and Sokim. Painting is a very serious business and they are set to prove that their results exceed those of their male colleagues.



Many thanks to all of our supporters and clients for their help and guidance ensuring all of our staff receive well qualified training.

Student Health

Once lockdown was eased, we took a student to the Children's Surgical Centre in Phnom Penh. Her hip was broken in a fall quite a few years ago. She comes from a family of 10 children and there was no money to take her to a doctor. She has a very bad limp and I wondered whether it could be fixed. At the moment they have provided her with a built up shoe but said she will need surgery in the future. We have to go back in December.

Career Students

Being a small group, our career students are able to keep their extra lessons with Khmer teachers going. No idea when the Year 12 exams or interviews for IT universities will be held though but we have been submitting applications.

Staff

The teaching staff for the school is not as lucky as the vocational trade staff. At the beginning of the school closure we were able to employ the staff planning for next year, holding training sessions, tidying up and going through resources, cleaning and organizing the library etc. but we have run out of jobs. The Buddhist Library won't and we can't pay them if they are not working in some form. The end of the year seems a long way off before we can get back to normal. Cheers, Janine and Andrew

We thank the Buddhist Library in Australia and Cambodia for their continued support of our project.

Global Development Group not only provides tax deductible receipts for donations but also provides support for their members in many varied ways.

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

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<https://globaldevelopmentgroup.org/au/projects/j674n-kep-gardens-community-project/>



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A wander around the garden this morning:



Start by doing what's necessary, then do what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible. (Francis of Assisi)