



NEWSLETTER

Number 06 / 2021

Goutte d'eau – a child support network



KEP FARM– THE PROJECT MOVES FORWARD

COVID 19 – A SPECIFIC CHALLENGE

Dear donors of Goutte d'eau - a child support network,

GEcsn's board is composed of eight people, all of whom have been involved in the projects of Goutte d'eau in Cambodia for some time and are familiar with the problems encountered in the field. Although all board members have returned to Switzerland, they continue to volunteer their time and professional expertise to ensure that at-risk children and their families receive the help they need.

The past few years have been challenging but also very productive for GEcsn, which has been going through a period of renewal at the operational level since 2015. It has been necessary to rethink existing projects while launching new ones such as the Kep Farm - a sheltered workplace for young people with mental disabilities - which opened in 2016 and the Neak Loeng Center of Excellence which has been welcoming children with disabilities since 2018.

More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has confronted us with completely new tasks both in 2020 and 2021. The closure of Damnok Toek schools has pushed the teams to rethink their programs: the children no longer went to school but school came to them!

These new challenges increased our involvement at the operational level and thereby the costs of our programs. In addition, the poorest people have been and are still particularly affected by the crisis linked to Covid 19. Indeed, for many, the loss of their job meant a return to poverty and Damnok Toek has had to provide direct assistance to enable them to meet their needs.



We have always been able to count on your loyalty and this is why we are asking for your support today: your donation, whatever the amount, will allow us to continue to respond to the emergency situation in Cambodia.

*With our warmest regards,
the members of GEcsn's board*

*Judith Berlinger, Martina Honegger, Veronika Leu, Cristina Masso, Benjamin Frey,
Christoph Jakob, Patrick Klausberger et Fabio Molinari*

The Kep Farm – a place to live and work for young people with mental disabilities



The Kep Farm opened in 2016 after 4 years of planning and construction. The project has been a great success from the very beginning: on the one hand, it has completely changed the lives of its beneficiaries by giving them perspectives they did not dare to believe in, and on the other hand, as a pioneering project, it has opened the door for other projects for people with disabilities in Cambodia.

The Kep Farm enables its residents to live as independently as possible and encourages them to gain self-confidence and participate in society.

Development of the Kep Farm

While in the early years priority was given to the implementation of the programs for the beneficiaries, it has now become possible to focus on the development of the agricultural activities to ensure that the project can, in the long term, be partly financed by the income they generate. The developments implemented will make the daily work of the beneficiaries more interesting and foster their personal development by creating opportunities to develop and promote their mobility and increase their autonomy and self-confidence.

The structure of the Kep Farm

The Kep Farm is divided into two projects that are linked but have specific objectives and strategies:

- The **residence**, where young adults with mental disabilities live in a protected environment.
- The **farm**, where young people work and participate in agricultural activities, from cultivation to the sale of products.

The Kep Farm, which can now accommodate up to 24 young people with mental disabilities, currently hosts 19 beneficiaries who have all made great progress in their personal development since the project opened in 2016.



2021 – a key year

With the finalization of the residential programs in 2021, new programs can now be implemented at the Kep Farm, giving a new face to the project:

- **Residence**: creation of semi-independent housing.
- **Farm**: development of the **Agricultural programs** with the creation of an ecological **Forest Garden**, accessible to the public, that will be organized with fertile vegetation providing sustainably produced food – fruits, vegetables, tea leaves/flowers – and of the **Social Enterprise** with the creation of a brand name for the tea produced at the farm, the construction of a Tea House and Shop (Coffee and Tea House) and the launch of vocational training for young people with disabilities and young farmers living in the Kep area.

Redevelopment of the agricultural space

The space is divided into separate living and working areas:



Residence/Living: the **Kep Village** will allow some of the beneficiaries to live in a small 'hamlet' where there will be semi-independent housing and housing for young people coming to the farm for training. In addition, an **"independent living" pilot project** will be developed by the end of 2023, which will allow the most independent residents to live independently off the property while maintaining their jobs on the farm.

Farm / Work: the Khmer House, the vegetable garden - where fruits, vegetables and herbs are produced - the chicken coop, 2 fish ponds and 1 pond for ducks.

The Kep Farm opens up to the outside world

The years 2021 to 2023 will see the realization of projects that GECSN has long dreamed of. New elements will be built to open the Kep Farm to a wider public.

The **Coffee and Tea House** will be located in the center of the farm, surrounded by rice fields, the Forest Garden and the vegetable garden. Guests will be able to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with homemade food. Afterwards, visitors will be able to purchase the farm's organic products in the adjacent shop.



The **Khmer House** will be converted into a production center for tea and other specialties such as jam, ice cream, candles and other scented items that will be sold at the store. The farm also sells organic fruits, vegetables and eggs as well as chickens and ducks for breeding. The two fish ponds located at the entrance of the farm will offer fishing activities to customers who will be able to get fresh fish.

Breaking down barriers

With the further development of its social enterprise project, the Kep Farm is moving towards new horizons: its openness to the outside world will help break down the barriers that exist for people with disabilities, and visitors will be able to see through direct encounters that they are people like you and me. The happy faces of the young people who live and work on the farm are the best testimony to the success of this pioneering project, which offers them the most independent life possible and a positive sense of self-worth.



Residents who live and work at the Kep Farm should be able to live as independently as possible, feel a sense of security, have their self-confidence enhanced, and participate actively in the community.

Covid-19 : challenges and measures

Situation

The year 2021 started on a hopeful note with only a few cases of Covid-19 but after a new outbreak in Phnom Penh in February, the country had to shut down, and schools and businesses closed.

Impact

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant a return to poverty for many families, especially in the city of Poipet. Most of them are and have been facing job losses and food shortages due to high price inflation. The MoSVY - Ministry of Social Welfare - has therefore requested Damnok Toek's support to cope with the crisis.

Actions taken by Damnok Toek

Damnok Toek provided immediate assistance to families in need and played a leading role in raising awareness in communities in Poipet and Neak Loeung. The organization distributed hygiene items such as disinfectants, masks, etc. as well as food parcels and fruits and vegetables from its garden (in Poipet).



Schools

The Cambodian government launched an e-learning platform in March 2020 after the closure of schools. Unfortunately, this platform was not accessible to everyone because many children do not have access to a computer or WIFI. Damnok Toek therefore looked for other ways to continue to deliver non-formal education to children in its programs in Poipet and Neak Loeung. A teacher and a social educator visited the students at their homes to give them homework and help them overcome their difficulties. During their visits, they also assessed the home environment to determine if there was any potential risk for child protection. Covid-19 lessons and outreach sessions were held in small groups outside.



Damnok Toek handled the period of program closure during the Covid-19 crisis very well. Educating staff about Covid-19 and protective measures was a top priority to help them overcome their own fear so that they could continue to help at-risk children and their families while protecting themselves. Thus, Damnok Toek's support for at-risk children and their families has never been interrupted and has been able to adapt to new challenges in innovative ways.

It is difficult to say what impact the crisis in Cambodia will have in the coming months and to what extent it will continue to pose challenges for fundraising in Cambodia and Switzerland. Every donation, regardless of the amount, allows us to support the measures already in place in Cambodia as well as those that will need to be developed in the future.

Thank you in advance for your support during this difficult period of time!



To make a donation:

Bank transfer:
PostFinance, CH-3030 Bern
Konto: 87-183923-5
IBAN CH17 0900 0000 8718 3923 5

Online by credit card or PayPal:

www.gouttedeau.org