

Cambodia 2018: Are you Keeping Score?

June 5, 2018

The score is now bikes = 2,466 (well on the way to the target of 5,000 bikes = 5,000 girls in school for Lotus Outreach (www.lotusoutreach.org)) and 67 wells (nearly 100...)

Today, we gave away 100 bikes to 100 little girls who really want to be in school but who live far away. Their families are too poor to buy bikes for them so some of them walk to and from school in the blistering heat for up to one and half hours a day each way.

And we gave them a bike.... With a contract: they must take care of the bike and stay in school for at least two years.

Girls don't finish school. Too few girls attend secondary school in Cambodia, often they are so disadvantaged that they cannot keep up. Teachers teach part of the curriculum in class, the rest in costly tutorials = impossible for the poor.

Here you have Sam Savin aged 9 who lives 3 hours walk from the school! This is how much she appreciates the bike!



What was striking was the lack of smiles: the children were all very serious. But we finally managed to break the ice with Raksmeay, Country



Sam Savin going home with Dad



The Governor and mujin!



We're taking it home — altogether!



Representative, and Pisey, Office Manager, getting them to sing.... We felt that either life was so hard that they couldn't smile or that they couldn't believe their luck. But slowly the smiles came!

Six Wells:

all serving a minimum of 15 families = about 75 people going up to 25 + families in the dry season = 125 people minimum (often more). All users make an initial payment of USD2.50 for the users (not from the seasonal users. One



On the way to the wells



woman explained that they were happy to share the water as they had spent so many years begging for water from others!!! What a lovely attitude!



There are guidelines for making wells. They should have a committee to maintain the well, all users should contribute, wells should be a minimum 2 kilometers apart, they should serve at least 15 families, they



Before

should be kept clean and have a barrier around them to prevent animals from going too near and so on.

This year we arrived in part of Kampot Province to visit our 6 wells. Off we trudged into the countryside along the narrow paths between paddy

fields, along the roads used for going and coming and we started off being very impressed but found that things were not perfect as we went along.

Do you want to make a well? Here's how:

1. Map the village with the houses to know where users are.
2. Accept requests from village heads + consensus with commune heads.
3. Staff verify location and ensure it follows the rules.
4. Formation of committee and explanation of roles and maintenance.
5. Contribution (\$2.50) is collected from each family.
6. Drilling. (Well users have to help, providing snacks, making the barrier.)
7. Testing water.
8. Hand-over meeting.
9. Follow-up monthly visits by local staff.
10. Delivery of billboard + 3 x training in maintenance and hygiene.
11. Checking visit to see all is in order.



AFTER

12. Final payment to the company.



They may never carry water!



She carried water from age 15 to 69!

The result of our visit to the six wells was that we decided further conditions have to be imposed such as ensuring that the committee is not all from the same family, that the locations are okayed by donors and supervisors, not just the local partner and so on.

This is why I work with Lotus Outreach (www.lotusoutreach.org): because they monitor really really thoroughly. They know where each cent goes and make sure that the people being served are those that deserve help and that the help is correctly geared to them.

Women's Shelter

We visited one of the shelters for women rescued from sex trafficking or violence. CWCC (Cambodian Women's Crisis Center www.cwcc.org.kh) run three centers giving shelter to about 60 residents limited to stays of 6 months or a year — a continually changing population. The counselors and reintegration officers cover about 500 cases altogether.



We asked what the reintegration officer does. She tries to find ways of helping these damaged women go back to a normal life. Her job is hard as she follows up on the scattered placed individuals. Checks are conducted once a month, then every three months up to 1 year or 1 1/2 years if necessary. At the shelter there are sewing classes and some girls learn hair-styling and beauty treatments and so on.



We visited the hair salon, One of the girls there was just 14!

Hope you enjoyed this journey in Cambodia! Take care, mujin

