



PEOPLE IMPROVEMENT ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

People Improvement Organization (PIO) serves over 1300 Cambodian children with free education, nutrition, healthcare and vocational training. We provide some of the most vulnerable children in Cambodia with hope for the future. With the right education, support and encouragement Cambodian people will be able to take greater control of their lives and, as a result, they will break the cycle of poverty.

*Phymean Noun, Founder/CEO, CNN Hero 2008,
World's Children's Prize laureate 2015*



April– May- June
2016

PHYMEAN NOUN AT THE ROYAL PALACE

Our founder and CEO, Phymean Noun was invited to the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh to meet the Queen Mother of Cambodia. They discussed about Phymean's life, how she founded PIO and what still needs to be done to transform the lives of more impoverished children in Cambodia.

We feel honored that the Queen Mother has chosen to support PIO's work and thankful for all her generous donations of rice, school supplies, sarongs, books and money. These gifts will help us further our work and dismantle the barriers to education, independence and leadership.

This event has been broadcasted on TVK: http://www.khmerlive.tv/archive/20160503_TVK_Daily_News.php (to watch Phymean, go to min: 10.20)



PLAY AROUND THE WORLD AT PIO



Play is a way for children to have fun, release energy and tension, and express themselves.

Huge thank you to Play Around the World (PAW) volunteers from the University of Alberta!

PAW organized educational and recreational activities for the students of our outreach centre in Stung Meanchey.

They will be working with us for two more months using educational games to promote active learning and help kids develop in a healthy and happy way.

HAPPY KHMER NEW YEAR 2016

Soursdey Chnam Thmey! Happy Khmer New Year!

Khmer New Year is Cambodia's biggest holiday. It is a three day celebration to mark the end of the year and the beginning of the new one. Traditionally this time represents the end of the harvest season, when farmers can finally relax and enjoy the fruits of their hard work before the rainy season begins.

Khmer New Year is an important time to spend with family and friends, prepare special dishes to share and play traditional games. On the first day of the holiday, Cambodians clean and prepare the house for the celebration and they offer fruits to the angels. On the second day, they go to the pagoda to offer thanks to Buddha, play traditional games and eat food all together. On the last day, Cambodians pay respects to their ancestors, and younger generations ritually wash the elders, honouring their wisdom and asking for their blessing.

If you have never been in Phnom Penh during this period, it is hard to describe the feeling you experience when this bustling city turns into a ghost town. Citizens go back to their home villages in the provinces to celebrate the holiday with their extended families and Phnom Penh literally empties for 3 days.

Khmer New Year is a very important period for our PIO children and their families and we ensured that they got to spend some joyful time together. Therefore, we arranged transport for those children whose families are in the provinces and we distributed rice to families in need. Unfortunately, some of our students were not able to join their families this year and they stayed at PIO shelter. The staff made sure the children didn't feel left out. In fact, our students had the chance to visit the pagoda, play traditional games, and dance all together.

We hope to have made Khmer New Year special for our PIO children, giving them memories that will accompany them for the rest of their lives.



PEIRCE SECONDARY SCHOOL VISITS PIO



Huge thank you to the students and teachers of Peirce Secondary School, Singapore who have been supporting PIO since 2013!

In June, they visited PIO and organized a whole range of activities such as drawing, read aloud, origami etc. for our PIO students in Stung Meanchey. Pierce Secondary School also donated 100 uniforms, tin food, and 1.5 tons of rice.

Thank you for your constant support and for all your generous donations, without which we would not be able to give disadvantaged Cambodian children the education, nutrition and support they need.



BOREI SANTEPHEAP II GOES TO KEP



In May, 80 students and teachers from Borei Santepheap II went on a day trip to Kep, a beautiful seaside town in southern Cambodia. Everybody was very excited to have the opportunity to visit a different province and to leave the heat of Phnom Penh for a day.

PIO rented a bus for the occasion and, during the three-hour ride to Kep, our students and teachers never got bored: they played games, sang songs and played the guitar.

Once in Kep, the students went straight to the beach! Everybody was very excited to be there, as many of them had never seen the ocean before. Most of the students immediately ran into the water, swimming and playing games. When they were too tired to swim, the fun moved to the beach, where they played volleyball and soccer. At 11am they had lunch all together: crabs, squids and shrimps. Kep delicacies!

Everybody enjoyed the food and each other company. Some of the teachers also entertained the rest of the group playing the guitar and singing Khmer songs. The students were extremely happy and their smiles were infectious. They loved being surrounded by nature and took hundreds of photos of Kep beautiful landscape. Before heading back to Phnom Penh, the students bought some souvenirs for their families to thank them for letting them go on this day trip to the seaside.

It was a beautiful day and the students enjoyed breathing some fresh air and swimming in the ocean. When we asked them: "What did you like the most about this trip?" The majority of them simply replied: "Everything!" Borei Santepheap II staff and students enjoyed every single moment they spent together and they hope to have the chance to repeat this experience in the nearest future.

STAFF OF PIO



Meet Dr Vuthy, our full-time doctor specialised in paediatrics. Through his work, the quality of medical care we provide has significantly improved.

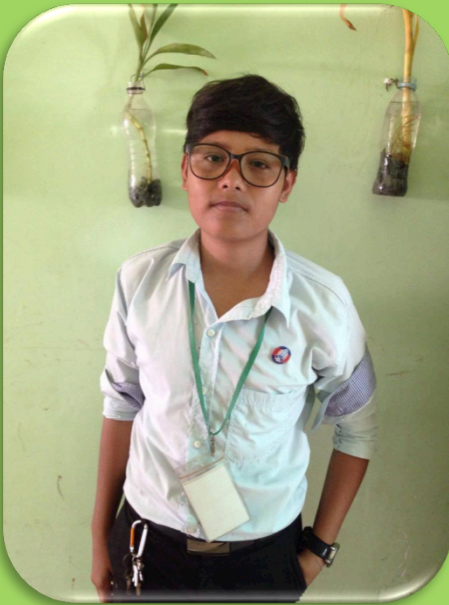
"I grew up in Takeo Province. My family wasn't rich, but my parents had enough money to support my education. When my parents divorced, my mom struggled to put food on the table, so I had to drop out of school. I decided to move to Phnom Penh in search for better work opportunities. Unfortunately, I couldn't find a steady job. I occasionally worked as a dishwasher or as a scavenger for many years. I had literally nothing. I didn't have a house, so I used to sleep in the street, in pagodas or at the train station. Moreover, I had to steal clothes and shoes because I couldn't afford to buy them. After some year, an NGO found me and offered me a place to live and the opportunity to continue with my education. Thanks to their support, I could graduate from high school!

After that, I went on to study Medicine at the university in Phnom Penh. During my studies, I worked as a volunteer at PIO, until they offered me a full-time job. At PIO I provide health care for the children and PIO staff and I attend to over 300 patients per month! I also run the hygiene education program and organise learning activities to teach students the importance of maintaining cleanliness and good health.

I'm happy at PIO because I feel that I can really make a difference here. The NGO that supported me didn't have a full-time doctor and that could be very dangerous for the children. That's why I decided to become a doctor. It is time for me to give back and help other children who come from an extremely poor background, like me. I want to tell them my story and demonstrate that it is possible to achieve your dreams with the right motivation, support and encouragement".

STORIES OF HOPE

Veasna, University student



"I was born in Prey Veng Province in southern Cambodia. My mother died when I was just a kid and my father moved to Thailand shortly after. I was sent to live with my aunt. My family could not afford to send me to school. I really wanted to study and I've always found English Language fascinating. There was an international school in my home town, but I couldn't attend it without any money. Thus, I used to hide and listen to the English lessons from outside the classroom where nobody could see me.

In Prey Veng, my family couldn't earn a lot of money, so my aunt and I moved to Phnom Penh in search for a better future. For many years, we worked as scavengers in the garbage dump and in the city. That period of my life...I will never forget it. It was difficult. I lived day by day. Sometimes we didn't know where to sleep, so we just slept on the street. We never had enough food and I always went to sleep hungry.

One day, my aunt saw me reading books and magazines and she asked me: "Do you want to go back to school?" I said yes! My aunt heard about PIO's free school in Stung Meanchey and she sent me to study there. When I heard the news my heart started beating so fast, I thought I was having a heart attack!

I'm now a Finance student at Western University in Phnom Penh and I also teach at PIO Borei Santepheap II School. When I complete my studies, I want to start my own business and export goods made in Cambodia by Cambodians. I want to help my people find a job and let the world know about the beauties of my country and the skills of the people of Cambodia".



Pally, grade 8

"I was born in Prey Veng Province, in the northwest part of Cambodia. My family was very poor and struggled to put food on the table. When I was just a little girl, I moved to Phnom Penh with my grandmother and my sister to work as a scavenger at Stung Meanchey garbage dump. I used to work from dawn to sunset. I was tired and dirty. From the hills of the garbage dump, I could see a small school building, where the children were studying and playing. It was PIO's first school. I envied those students and dreamed of having the chance to go to school one day.

After a year of exhausting work at the garbage dump for 1-2\$ a day, I decided that it was time for me to think of my future and that of my family. I asked my grandmother permission to go to PIO's free school in Stung Meanchey. At first, she refused because we never had enough money or food, but I didn't give up. I fasted instead! My grandmother, worried about my health, finally agreed to send me to PIO's school.

I felt so happy I couldn't stop smiling and jumping around! I could finally go to school!"

At 6 years old, I started studying at PIO Kindergarten and I'm now in Grade 8. I study because education will improve my future and that of my family. If all Cambodians get a high-quality education, nobody will be poor and Cambodia won't be a poor country anymore!

When I'm not studying, I work as a teacher assistant at PIO Stung Meanchey School. I want to get valuable experience in order to realize my dream. I want to become the principal of my own school where poor children can study for free."

PIO NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

PIO new school building in Stung Meanchey is almost finished! PIO student and artist Somaly is working hard to paint the walls of the new classrooms.



PIO VOLUNTEERS



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donation**

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