

Damnok Toek

To assist vulnerable children and their families



2017 ANNUAL REPORT របាយការណ៍ ប្រចាំឆ្នាំ



**DAMNOK TOEK 20TH ANNIVERSARY
1997-2017 : TWENTY YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

អង្គការតំណក់ទឹក

ជួយកុមារងាយរងគ្រោះ និងគ្រួសារ

« *This year is very special because Goutte d'Eau-Damnok Toek is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Time has flown by and many achievements have been achieved during these years. In the name of Damnok Toek's staff, I would like to say that we are very proud of the great work accomplished and that we will remain committed to Damnok Toek's great mission to help vulnerable children.*



Dr Sam Sovannarith, director of Damnok Toek

Message from the director



Dr Sam Sovannarith, director of Damnok Toek

I started to work with Damnok Toek in April 1997, at the beginning of Damnok Toek’s project implementation. I really wanted to work for an NGO that took care of vulnerable children. Born in 1966, I grew up during the war. During this time children were not spared; we had no food, no health care and no education. My desire to help vulnerable children was reinforced by the fact that in Cambodia, Children’s Rights had not improved since the national Election organized by the United Nation in 1993.

Over the past 20 years I learned a lot from Damnok Toek. This NGO permitted me to work not only as a doctor but also as an educator, a social worker, a counselor and then a leader. I remember my first job as a social worker in Neak Loeung, every morning I drove a car to pick up street-working children around the ferry terminal to bring them to Damnok Toek’s day care center. In this center we provided children with non formal education, health and food. After this job I started to work as a doctor to treat children from the communities. In the afternoon I worked with the coordination team to discuss about project planning, budgeting and other project objectives. My job is never monotonous and that’s why I love it.

Damnok Toek’s programs have helped and rescued thousands of vulnerable children. When we talk about vulnerable children here, we talk about a

lot of different cases such as street-living children, street-working children, trafficked children, substance abuse children and children with disabilities. Thanks to Damnok Toek work these children have a chance to access safe shelter care, medical care, counseling and education. After having been welcomed and rehabilitated in Damnok Toek’s projects, many of them were reintegrated either into their original family or directly into the Khmer society to live independently.

These results could only be achieved thanks to the collaboration and commitment of Damnok Toek’s staff and their incredible work. But Damnok Toek would be nothing without its donors and its many NGO partners, all of whom I wish to thank today. Without their incredible support, Damnok Toek would not have been able to achieve all these results.

Dr Sam Sovannarith, director of Damnok Toek




Poipet, © 2016 Caritas Switzerland

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You can view the 2017 Activity Report on :

 <http://www.damnoktoek.org/>

I. DAMNOK TOEK AT A GLANCE

WHO WE ARE

Our history

1997

Goutte d'eau Switzerland started to work in Cambodia and established a centre for vulnerable children in Neak Loeung.

1999

Following a request from the Government, Goutte d'Eau Switzerland implemented a project in Poipet to rehabilitate children using substances and reintegrate victims of trafficking in Poipet.

2001

The project in Neak Loeung was registered as a Cambodian NGO by the Ministry of Interior under the name Damnok Toek Cambodia.

2003

The project in Poipet was registered as a Cambodian NGO by the Ministry of Interior under the name Damnok Toek Poipet.

Damnok Toek Cambodia and Goutte d'eau Switzerland opened a shelter for children with disabilities in Phnom Penh.

2012

Damnok Toek Cambodia and Damnok Toek Poipet merged into a single organisation called Damnok Toek (Goutte d'eau), operating as a new entity from January 2013 on.

2017

Damnok Toek (Goutte d'eau) and Goutte d'eau Switzerland opened a social business, including a residence and a farm, for young adults with mental disabilities in Kep.



Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

Our vision

Our vision is to assist all vulnerable children, particularly :

- > Trafficking victims
- > Street-working or street-living children
- > Children and young people living with physical or mental disabilities
- > Victims of any kind of exploitation or abuse.

Our mission

Our mission is to enable each vulnerable or marginalised child to realise his or her rights, to have all of its basic needs met, and to get an opportunity to develop its individual capacity.

With the support of communities, government and civil society representatives, DT identifies and implements responses to enhance access to a better future for the children most in need.

Preventing

Child abuse, substance abuse and child trafficking both internally within Cambodia and across borders.

Rehabilitating

Young substance abusers, disabled and traumatised children.

Integrating

Neglected children and street children into Cambodian society through non formal education, vocational training, job placement and formal education at public schools.

Reintegrating

Trafficked, disabled, and runaway children into their families of origin when possible, or into their communities or villages.



Reception Center Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

Neak Loeung

Since 1997, Damnok Toek has been running a drop-in centre and a residential shelter in Neak Loeung. These facilities provide vulnerable children from both the communities and DT's residential centre with access to counselling, non-formal education, vocational training and medical care.



Neak Loeung, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

Poipet

Beginning work in Poipet in 1999, DT has been assisting vulnerable children and their families through a range of targeted health, education and vocational programs. Located in the north west of Cambodia at the main border crossing to Thailand, Poipet can be an exceptionally hazardous place for children.



Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

WHERE WE WORK



Kep

In 2016, Damnok Toek opened a social business, a farm for young adults with mental disabilities. This project was created to respond to the needs of young adults with severe mental disabilities who could not continue to live with the children of the Handicap Center.



Kep © 2018 Kathleen Hertel



Phnom Penh

In 2003, Damnok Toek opened a residential center for children with mental and/or physical disabilities. This project was created in order to fill the lack of specialized structures in Cambodia.



Phnom Penh, © 2018 Damnok Toek

2. HIGHLIGHT OF 2017

KEP RESIDENCE AND FARM

Damnok Toek and Goutte d'Eau Switzerland built the Kep Farm to accommodate young adults with mental disabilities and thus ensure adequate follow-up for the children of the Handicap Center created in Phnom Penh.

The goals of the project are :

- > Provide a place to live and get cared for, adapted to its beneficiaries: physiotherapy, occupational therapy and medical care.
- > Maintain a living and working environment that allows its beneficiaries to live their adult lives with dignity.
- > Create an agricultural program guided by permaculture (bio) principles so as to generate an income and ensure the sustainability of the Kep Farm and its programs.
- > Maximize the autonomy of its beneficiaries to enable them to reintegrate the Cambodian society by participating in the farm's activities (cultivating, breeding, selling on the market, delivering products, etc.)
- > Develop a vocational training program in agriculture (horticulture, arboriculture, and breeding) for young people of other DT centers.
- > Promote the Kep Farm in Cambodia as a flagship project to motivate other organizations to create similar projects for young adults with disabilities.

The Kep Farm opened its doors in 2016 and ever since its programs have been very successful.

As soon as the first beneficiaries arrived at this flagship project, they appreciated their new home. After a few weeks of getting used to their living space and activities, they all had made great progresses in terms of their social commitments and self-reliance, and had also improved their appetite.



Kep, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel



The Kep Farm project was an indispensable project in order to find a solution for Damnok Toek's most vulnerable beneficiaries. We are hoping that this very innovating project will become a model for other actors in the field of disability.



LONG Sanrithy, Deputy Director, Damnok Toek, Cambodia



Kep, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

3. PROJECTS ACHIEVEMENTS 2017

DROP IN CENTER

The Drop In Center offers a safe and child-friendly space for street children to take a break from their daily work.

Children can also benefit from a daily two-hour literacy and numeracy class, recreational activities, meals and a safe shelter at night.

Outreach takes place regularly in the streets, in rubbish dumps, directly in the communities and where children work on the Thai/Cambodian border. Each month mobile libraries and workshops are organized in the communities to sensitize children, youth and adults on topics affecting them such as trafficking, the importance of education, HIV, substance abuse, and sexual exploitation. A Mobile Rehabilitation unit travels to the communities 4 times a week to identify and help children using drugs.

in 2017

**273 children attending
DIC in average by day**

CHILDSAFE DROP IN CENTER

The Border Drop In Center is a reception centre housed at the deportation re-entry location on the border of Thailand and Cambodia. Damnok Toek's role at this location is to identify unaccompanied children deported from Thailand, and to provide these children with emergency case management and referrals to make sure they are provided with appropriate care or, when possible, reunited with their families. This is done to reduce the likelihood of unsafe migratory behaviours, as well as the possibility of further trafficking or exploitation.

in 2017

**140 children under 18 years old
arrived alone at the border**



Drop In Center Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

TRANSITIONAL CARE FACILITIES AND GROUP HOME

The Transitional Care Facility Project (TCF) and Group Home Project (GH) are residential services provided by Damnok Toek. These services are segmented and grouped by age and need. Transitional Care Facilities offer long-term residential care for children between six and 14 years old, while Damnok Toek Group Homes are for youth between 14 and 18 years old.

in 2017 27 children stayed in the TCF, 10 of them were reintegrated either into their family, or another NGO, or a Group Home.

RECEPTION CENTER

The Reception Centre Project (RC) offers effective and sustainable solutions for victims of human trafficking, deported and repatriated children, with an emphasis on assistance delivery by grassroots organizations; including, but not limited to psycho-social support, family tracing and assessment, housing, food, legal aid, access to justice, medical care, training and sustainable livelihoods.

in 2017 44 children stayed in the RC center, 22 of them were reintegrated into their family or in another NGO



Residential Center in Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Vocational Training (VT) program primarily welcomes young adults from DT's residential centers that cannot be reintegrated into public school. The students that graduate the program are given an apprenticeship at a local business.

The VT program and job placement are one of the main components of DT's reintegration strategy for young adults, offering them the possibility of becoming economically autonomous.

Young adults are given the opportunity to gain on the job experience and develop links in a real professional environment. DT has connections with other NGO apprenticeships, making it easier to transition into the formal employment sector.



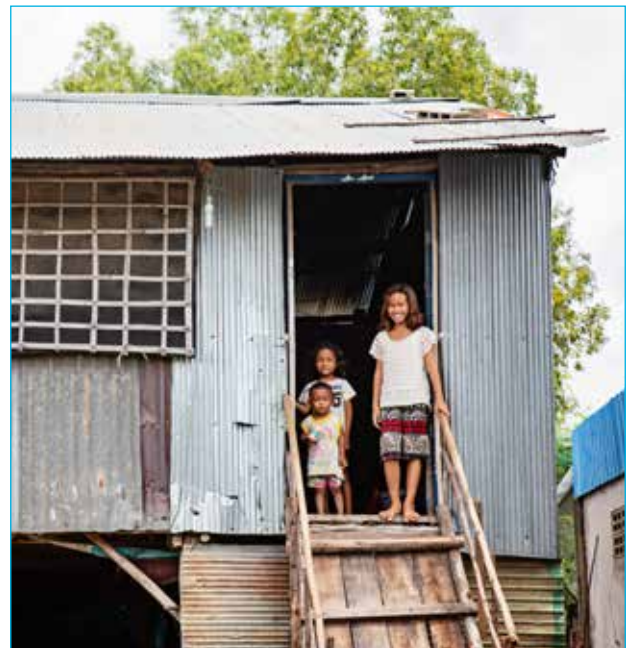
Vocational Training Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

INCOME GENERATION ACTIVITIES

The Income Generation Activity Scheme (IGAS) aims to help families gain a regular income and reduce the risk of households resorting to their children's labour to gain additional income. The participating families commit to send their children to school, to take good care of them and to prevent them from working on the streets. DT provides loans of up to \$300 to be used by the families to start small businesses. They are also offered training and close support to ensure the sustainability of the business.

in 2017

36 families were supported



Family assisted by DT in Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

NON FORMAL EDUCATION

The Non-Formal Education Project (NFE) is one of Damnok Toek's most unique and successful projects, as it offers non-traditional schooling to at-risk, marginalized, and vulnerable children who would otherwise have no educational options. Nine class levels are offered daily to an average of 300 children in Poipet and 150 children in Neak Loeng.

The program offers a morning and an afternoon session to make sure that the children have the opportunity to attend school whatever their work schedule is.

in 2017 450 children in average attended NFE classes every day



Samerkum Center Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel



Student from Non Formal Education, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

CHILDSAFE

Damnok Toek is part of the International Network “Childsafe” which aims to reduce the number of children living and working on the streets and to improve the protection of children from all forms of abuse. “ChildSafe members” are people from the communities (street sellers, Tuk Tuk drivers...) that are trained by DT’s staff on child protection and how to identify at-risk children. A ChildSafe Hot-line (24 hours a day/7 days a week) enables ChildSafe members, partners, or any person in need to call and report if a child is seen to be in an at-risk situation.



Medical Clinic in Poipet , © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

in 2017 DT has a team of 68 chilsafe agents and the social workers received 331 calls in Poipet and Neak Leuong

MEDICAL CLINIC

The Medical Clinics in Poipet and Neak Loeung provide care to the children in DT’s projects as well as to the members of the community, giving them access to consultations and treatments for free or at a very low cost. Serious cases are referred to a hospital, mainly in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap. DT’s medical care focuses on the reduction of child malnutrition. Due to their poor socio-economic circumstances, some mothers are not able to breastfeed their babies. DT supports several families with powdered milk to prevent malnutrition and child mortality.



Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

in 2017

- Outside patients : 3865**
- Inside patients : 2112**
- New patients : 2019**
- Referrals : 50**

HANDICAP CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISABILITIES

Damnok Toek's Phnom Penh centre shelters children and young people living with physical and/or mental disabilities. Many of the children are former street children, as well as children who were abandoned or trafficked. Residents benefit from medical care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychosocial support, and also attend school outside the centre when appropriate. DT's programs support the development of skills to reinforce the children's autonomy so that they can be reintegrated whenever possible, and to prevent further trafficking or exploitation.

in 2017

23 children stayed at the Handicap Center

Neak Loeung, © 2018 Damnok Toek



Damnok Toek resident during annual trip, Kep, © 2018 Hugo Barbazanges

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4. OBJECTIVES 2018

NEW DISABILITY PROGRAM IN NEAK LOEUNG

Damnok Toek has been supporting children and their families in Neak Loeung since 1997 at the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation. Following the construction of the Tsubasa Bridge in 2015, the situation of street children in Neak Loeung has changed a lot. Indeed, before the opening of the bridge many local or migrant families lived in Neak Loeung where they came with their children to work on the ferry or nearby. At the opening of bridge, most of these families migrated to other cities in Cambodia, in search of new economic opportunities, taking their children with them.

Damnok Toek's board members decided to close some projects in Neak Loeung as they had become obsolete (Transitional Care facility, Drop In center and Vocational Training).

Thereafter, the board decided to transfer the children with disabilities from Phnom Penh to a more nurturing environment in Neak Loeung and ensuring that they would be more thoughtfully integrated into a location with more children facilities.

Based on a careful assessment of the children needs and to fully address the challenges they face in Cambodia, DT decided to create a center of reference in the disability field.

This program will differ from the others as it will not only target children and their caregivers, but also target all the stakeholders involved in the field of disability (professionals, NGOs partners, authorities, etc.) :

- > **Small Group Homes for children with disabilities (CWD)**
- > **Rehabilitation and Day care center for CWD**
- > **Inclusive education – Specialized classes for CWD**
- > **Outreach and Community Based rehabilitation**
- > **Trainings, Workshops and awareness raising in the disability field**

The opening of this program is planned for July 2018



Tsubasa bridge Neak Loeung , © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

“FUTURES” EMPLOYMENT OFFICE IN POIPET

With the support of Caritas, Damnok Toek ‘Futures Employment Resource Project’ will use preventative methods to address the gaps in employment care and resources provided to youth at risk of human trafficking or exploitation.

Inspired by many of the services provided through Friends International’s ‘Futures’ Project, this project aims to provide a holistic approach to employment services in Cambodia. Activities will support the creation of a one-stop job resource office which will provide referrals for training and job leads, information regarding vocational training, and technical support to assist with resume building and computer training. Youth coming to the office can access on-off services or long-term support through the care of trained case managers and counselors.

The project will open in April 2018



Vocational Training in Poipet © 2016 Caritas Switzerland

5. COLLABORATION

Collaboration with Government and Local stakeholder



LONG Sanrithy, Deputy Director of Damnok Toek

It is very important for Damnok toek to work in partnership with the local authorities and other relevant institutions and organizations. Damnok Toek has indeed developed partnerships with various stakeholders :

- > Local authorities, villages' chiefs, team leaders and the Poipet police: identification and referral of at-risk and vulnerable children. DT meets the social workers of Poipet commune every month.
- > Ministry and Department of Social Affairs (DoSVY): partnerships for social work, family tracing, family assessments, follow-up, reintegration, and when DT has to withdraw a child from his family.
- > Poipet Transit Centre (PTC): run by the MoSVY, the center welcomes all people deported and repatriated by the Thai authorities upon their arrival in Cambodia. PTC refers all children under 13 years old to DT Reception centre and since 2010 PTC also refers youth between 14 and 18 years for a period of one to two weeks to DT.
- > BIGC-Border Issue Group on Children: Agencies working with children along the border are part of the BIGC. DT attends BIGC monthly meetings. Cambodian and Thai authorities join the meeting, every three months,
- > BVST (Border Victims Support Team): meetings are held every 3 months. DT conducts outreach with BVST once a week and refers cases to appropriate services (health centre, NGOs).
- > Health centres, hospitals run by NGOs: medical care, prevention, vaccinations.
- > Public schools: integration or reintegration into the public education system and follow-up.
- > Department of Education, Youth and Sports: exchange of experience and annual training of DT teachers to ensure the appropriate application of the government's education curriculum.
- > Private sector: apprenticeships, internships and job placement.
- > Other organisations and agencies working with children at the border, in Cambodia and in Thailand.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

2017

	TOTAL 2017	TOTAL 2018	VARIATION	%
Grant Receipts	395 948,00	459 013,00	- 63 065,00	-14 %
Other Donations	5 003,00	9 084,00	- 4 081,00	- 45 %
Other income	41 331,00	10 337,00	30 994,00	300 %
TOTAL RECEIPTS	442 282,00	478 434,00		
General Costs	330 945,00	317 590,00	13 355,00	4 %
Project Costs	232 282,00	254 368,00	- 22 086,00	- 9 %
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	563 227,00	571 958,00	- 8 731,00	

7. CHRISTOPH JAKOB INTERVIEW

WHERE IT ALL STARTED



Christoph JAKOB, Founder of Goutte d'eau

Christoph Jacob is one of the founder of Goutte d'eau, the Swiss fondation that started to work with street children in Cambodia. Later this fondation helped create Damnok Toek as an independant Cambodian NGO to pursue the work it started in 1997.

What brought you to Cambodia in 1996?

We were a group of friends, young people, studying and travelling throughout the world. We spent a lot of time discussing how we could just be observers of poverty, discrimination, and inequalities without doing anything about it. We felt guilty to just observe and then go back to our comfortable lives. In 1995, one of us, Peter Lanzrein, went to

Cambodia, where he discovered the extreme poverty and unbelievable conditions in which street children lived, abandoned to themselves with little hope for the future. Upon his return to Switzerland Peter shook us up and we decided to create the Goutte d'eau foundation to do something concrete, to raise funds in Switzerland and build up a project for street children in Cambodia. The foundation was created in Switzerland in 1996 and we started to work in Neak Loeung, Cambodia, in 1997.

What did you discover there?

An extremely poor country, still scarred by 10 years of civil war (1968-1975) and Khmer Rouge ruling (1975-1979). The country had no social services and barely any medical services apart from the Kantha Bopha hospital founded by Beat Richner in 1992. The overwhelming situation in which street children were living, most of them abandoned and/or abused, motivated us to act.



Damnok Toek Education Project in Poipet in 2005



The overwhelming conditions in which street children were living, abandoned to themselves with little hope for the future, motivated us to act.

Christoph JAKOB, Funder of GEcsn, Switzerland.



How did you start setting-up the programs in Cambodia?

Veronika, Peter and I went to Cambodia in 1996 to study the situation. We contacted the government, local authorities, and UNICEF to see what collaboration was possible, what was needed. They asked us to set up a program for street children in Neak Loeung where many poor families from South provinces would stop on their way to Phnom Penh in search of a better life. This project, created in 1997, was the first Damnok Toek project followed by projects in Poipet (1999), Phnom Penh (2003), and lately in Kep (2016).

Why are you still involved with the foundation today?

Several of GEcsn founders have become development experts and remain involved with the foundation today because they know its programs are making a difference for the children in Cambodia. The current situation in Cambodia is still very affected by the trauma of the war and the Khmer Rouges. The country still requires our support to develop programs in the fields of education, migration and disability. This is why we continue our work there.

How did Cambodia evolve over the past 20 years?

You can see changes in big towns but the need for progress remains in the country side where people live under the poverty line. GEcsn hopes that the success of its projects is showing an example for Cambodia, its people, the NGOs, and authorities.



Transitional Care Facility Building in Poipet, 1999

9. DAMNOK TOEK AT THE BORDER

20 YEARS OF INTERVENTION IN POIPEL

Damnok Toek’s core projects are offered in targeted Cambodian border cities, especially in Poipet, located in the Northwest of Cambodia at the principal border crossing with Thailand.

A large part of the population of Poipet consists of migrant families coming from other provinces all around Cambodia. Newcomers seek to make a living for their family from the cross trade industry or through self-employment. However, the economic opportunities for the Cambodians flocking to Poipet are rare and the majority of the residents live at survival levels, earning one US\$ a day or less. As a result of the lack of job opportunities in Cambodia, illegal migration and human trafficking to Thailand have become especially challenging.

The main victims of trafficking are marginalized children, who often become street beggars in Bangkok or end-up in the sex trade. Thai authorities arrest and deport/repatriate illegal Cambodians through Poipet, where the children are found left alone and without any sort of social or economical support to sustain themselves, thus becoming again an exposed target for trafficking or other forms of exploitation.

Understanding that human trafficking and abuse in Cambodia is often both a cause and effect of issues of poverty, **Damnok Toek has worked arduously for the past 20 years to develop programs that is focused on prevention, protection, and reintegration of vulnerable children and youth.**

HISTORY OF DAMNOK TOEK

In January 1997, Damnok Toek started to work in Cambodia under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Vocational Training and Youth (MOSVY). It assisted in building up a centre for vulnerable children in Neak Loeung, Prey Veng Province.

In January 1999, following a request from the MOSVY, Damnok Toek implemented a project aimed at rehabilitating children using substances in Poipet, Banteay Meanchey Province.

Realizing that the Thai authorities deported several hundred trafficked children to Poipet every



Poipet Border © 2014 James Antrobus

month, Damnok Toek started to collaborate with the IOM (International Organization for Migration), UNICEF (United Nation Children’s Fund), MOSVY and other agencies to set-up a structure offering deported children a chance to escape the cycle of trafficking.

In 2000, following a request from the MOSVY and UNICEF, Damnok Toek expanded its activities in Poipet and offered to the most at-risk children a range of new services: Shelter, Education, Vocational Training and Health Care.

CREATION OF A SAFE REPATRIATION PROCESS

Most of the deported children were considered as illegal immigrants in Thailand. They were held in a governmental Immigrant Detention Center (IDC) and exposed to several forms of abuse during their detention. After being deported to Cambodia, they would once again become the target of child traffickers and would often be sent back to Thailand.

Damnok Toek believed that the only way to give these children a chance to escape this vicious cycle of trafficking was to organize safe repatriations followed by referrals to specialized and experienced NGOs. To achieve this goal, Damnok Toek collaborated with several stakeholders and the authorities in order to create a safe process:

1. Damnok Toek and IOM made sure that trafficked children were no longer legally considered as illegal immigrants but as victims of trafficking. This allowed children identified by IOM as victims of trafficking to leave the Immigrant Detention Center (IDC) and to wait for their repatriation at a shelter of the Thai Department of Public Welfare (DPW).

2. Damnok Toek advocated with Thai NGOs so victims of trafficking could be identified by them

while they were still on the street. These NGOs could then refer the children to the DPW from where they could be repatriated.

3. DT’s main success was the signature of a bilateral agreement between Cambodia and Thailand in 2003 to combat human trafficking. After this agreement, the Poipet Transit Center (PTC) was established. The PTC is a reception center managed by Ministry of Social Affairs. It is the only official transit center for Cambodian migrant returnees through government to government repatriation. In addition, PTC is also deploying a mobile team whose role is to conduct quick screenings to identify victims of trafficking and labor exploitation, as well as children in need among the deportees and to refer them to NGO partners.

Since the creation of these programs, Damnok Toek has been supporting children and their families in Poipet. Welcoming more than 500 children per day, Damnok Toek projects offer ser-



Migrants arriving in Poipet Border © IOM 2014 (Photo by Joe Lowry)



Children interviewed in the border, Poipet, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

ices for street living, street working, substance abusing, trafficked children and abused children.

For the children who have been trafficked to Thailand or for the ones who face extremely poor and difficult living conditions, Damnok Toek offers full time services including shelters, education, health care, Vocational Training, and job placement support. The main goal is to take care of the children, stabilize them and finally reintegrate them back into their families when possible.

COLLAPSE OF THE SYSTEM

All previous efforts of the Cambodian and Thai governments to improve cross border relations were squashed in 2014: the Thai Government strengthened the laws on illegal migrants and the Cambodian Government stopped to fund the Poipet Transit Center.

Therefore, the PTC faced a lack of funding and reduced its activities at the border. Damnok Toek who historically had an agreement with the PTC for the referral of migrants below the age of 15 who required support, noted a significant

reduction in the number of cases referred. Informal reports also indicated that undocumented Cambodian migrants were being deported whilst bypassing the formal repatriation process to save time and costs.

At the beginning of 2016, a field observation was conducted by Damnok Toek, Peuan Peuan (Friends International in Thailand) and Krousar Thmey, and it was noticed that the number of migrants returned was still very high (180 to 300 per day).

Therefore, there was an urgent need to ensure the safety of the deported children and to provide them with assistance.

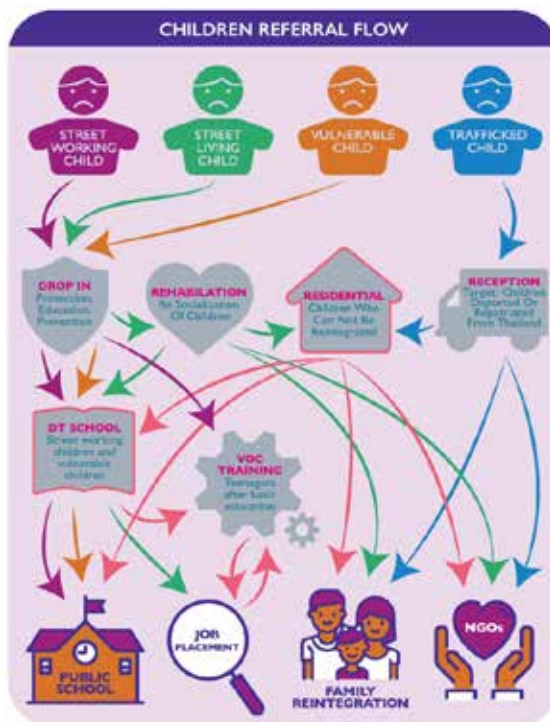
In August 2016, with the financial support of Goutte d'eau, Damnok Toek, Peuan Peuan and Krousar Thmey joined their efforts to open the Childsafe Drop In Center at the deportation Place (Phsar Mongkul) and took over the work of the PTC. More specifically, the Childsafe Drop In Center became the first point of contact for deported and repatriated migrant children and attended to them by: by being the first point of contact for deported and repatriated children migrants, by responding to their immediate needs, providing them information and counseling, collecting the information to facilitate case management, conducting family-tracing assessments, ensuring the safe referral to partners and participating in the reintegration follow-up.

INTERVENTION TODAY

Since the opening of the project, shifting migration laws and norms on illegal immigrants in Thailand has led to an increase in deportation of both adults and children, which has resulted in more processing, interviews, and referrals by the Childsafe Drop In center staff.

In 2017:

- 63,992 persons were deported
- 6,376 children under 18 years old were deported
- 140 children under 18 years arrived alone at the border
- 4,101 youths were deported
- 280 youths arrived alone at the border
- Only 19 children benefited from a safe repatriation



PERSPECTIVES

Given the severity of this situation, and the prospective harm to deported children in these precarious situations, Damnok Toek has increased its capacity and staff on the border to ensure children (mainly unaccompanied ones) are provided with safe and holistic resources that remove them from direct exposure to trafficking brokers and other forms of exploitation.

As such, Damnok Toek’s Child Safe Drop-In Centre on the border of Cambodia and Thailand, which was originally authorized by the Cambodian government to operate for a 12-month period, has since been approved for long-term services and presence on the border.

Unfortunately, most of the Cambodian children arrested in Thailand today are still held in an Immigrant Detention Center with adults from 1 day to 3 months before being deported to Cambodia.

Trafficking and unsafe migration remain a large risk for vulnerable children, especially for the ones living in Poipet. Children from Cambodia are mainly trafficked to Thailand where they work as street sellers, beggars and, in the worst cases, as sex-workers.

The willingness and capacity of Thai and Cambodian Authorities to pursue in-depth repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration is limited.

Therefore, we try to find new partners to ensure the continuation of organized repatriations for children, to give them also in the future a chance to get out of this re-trafficking circle.

Nevertheless, we continue to run our project with conviction, confident that we are making an impact.

8. CHAMROEUN BIOGRAPHY

FROM TRAFFICK TO UNIVERSITY



Chamroeun Kep center assistant, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

My name is Thach Sokchamroen and I am going to tell my story.

I was born on the 25th of August 1992 in a neighborhood of Sihanoukville on the Cambodian coast. I am the elder in a family of 5 siblings. At the age of two, I got seriously sick, I caught a big fever and despite all efforts of my father, doctors and nurses I gradually lost all muscles in my legs. After a few months I was not able to walk anymore. When I was a little child, I lived in a lot of different places with my parents; they were construction workers and needed to move a lot in order to find jobs. In a five-years period we lived in different places around Sihanoukville, then we moved to Koh Kong province (North East of Cambodia), to Phnom Penh and finally my parents moved to Poipet.

I was 7 years old when I was trafficked. Everything began the day my mother went to see a fortune teller. This man told her that I was a very lucky child, that wherever or with whomever I lived, good spirits were always on my side to protect and help me. Maybe this event motivated my mother to traffick me as she was sure I would be safe. During this period my father wasn't home because he was working in Siem Reap. I think that if he had been at home my mother wouldn't have sold me to traffickers.

Shortly after the meeting with the fortune teller, my mother brought me to a woman's house and told me to stay there. I can't say which nationality this woman was because she spoke neither Khmer nor Thai. I stayed one entire day with other children. Around midnight, a broker guided us at the border where we had to cross the canal separating Cambodia from Thailand. Then we walked during three hours to reach Thailand's highway where a truck was waiting for us. From there we reached Bangkok city by the road. When I arrived a stranger was waiting for me and took



Young Chamroeun in Damnok Toek Reception Center Poipet

me in a home. The first day I was authorized to do nothing and to take a rest from the journey. Nevertheless the day after the traffickers made me learn one sentence in Thai. I had to remember “Chun mai Roo” that can be translated by “I don’t know”. I needed to use it in case someone asked me something. Then the trafficker started to send me outside for begging.

This situation lasted for 2 years before I got arrested by the Thai police. First they sent me to jail but quickly they transferred me to a child center. There the authorities asked me if I was Khmer and I answered yes. In this center the children came from a lot of different countries such as Laos, Vietnam or Myanmar. I lived in this center nearly 2 years. My life there was not bad,



For us Damnok Toek staff was a bit like our parents and we called them Mommy.



Chamroeun , Former Damnok Toek accountant for Kep, Cambodia.

The trafficker responsible for me used to send me in different places for begging. Sometimes it was close to home and a bigger boy took me there by bicycle, but when the place was further I was obliged to take the bus. During this period I needed to beg every day from very early in the morning to at least midnight in the evening. But sometimes my trafficker went away from town and I stayed outside for 2 or 3 days without returning home. During these times I was obliged to sleep at the pagoda or in some stalls in the market.

nobody beat me up and a lot of children supported me by getting rice for me.

When I was begging, every hour someone was coming to collect my money. I was not allowed to use this money to buy some food or drinks, everything had to be collected. I remember that sometimes when I was very hungry I ate food from the trash. If I tried to use my money to buy some food the traffickers would beat me severely and even torture me. Even if I followed the rules I could be punished only because I didn’t succeed in bringing enough money. Sometimes the traffickers only deprived me of food, but they also beat me with belts and wires. Two times they even tortured me with electrical shocks.

Then, one day, I was deported to Poipet. From there Damnok Toek took care of me and transferred me to its reception center. When I arrived in the center I was very surprised to find out that two of my friends from the Thai children center already lived in the reception center. I stayed in DT’s reception center almost one year. There I went to school and reached grade 3. I remember very well this period; a lot of different staff was working in the center to take care of me and the other children. For us Damnok Toek staff was a bit like our parents and we called them Mommy. They helped me a lot in my studies, helped me with learning literature or drawing. One of my best memories was the day when we all went to visit Siem Reap province. Mom Veth, Mom Tra, Mom Em and Mom Mey helped me and even carried me to the top of Angkor temple, it was very impressive!

In October 2003, Damnok Toek transferred me to Phnom Penh into its new disability program. In this new project I received better health care



Chamroeun in the middle of Kep beneficiaries and staff, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

with regards to my disability. In 2005 the Phnom Penh center changed its location to Beoung Keng Kong. In this new center I went to Lavala school and finished my primary school in only 2 years thanks to accelerated classes. Then I started High School in the nearest Public School and after five years I passed grade 12 final exam. Because of my good results in school, I wanted to continue studying. Thanks to Damnok Toek support, I could enter the Universtiy where I studied Information and Technology.

I spent the two first years of my student life living in Damnok Toek center in Phnom Penh. Then Damnok Toek implemented a new project named Independent living home. This project was designed especially for Damnok Toek's youth who needed to study or follow professional training in Phnom Penh. I really liked my life in this new home; I was living with two other students in a little house. We became very good friends; my two roommates were very kind and helped me a lot because of my disability. During this period, Damnok Toek continued to support me by paying for my school fees, my food, my clothes; I even had a little pocket money.

In parallel to my studies, I wanted to work in order to get some experience and find a job directly after my studies. Damnok Towk supported me in this way. At the end of High school, Damnok Toek hired me to work as a social worker's assistant during 5 months. Then, I found a part-time job during my third year in university. I worked as a designer for one year. I was very glad to do these professional experiences because it allowed me to learn a lot.

Finally, after my graduation Damnok Toek decided to support me again by offering me a job. Indeed it needed an administrative assistant for its new project in Kep. This new project was created to take care of young adults with mental disability. To be fully operational in my new job, Damnok Toek offered me English and Excel training. After several months I improved my level of English and my Excel skills a lot and I was promoted as Kep project accountant.

Even if it is not easy every day, I am currently very pleased with my work from which I learn a lot. I want to thank all the people who work for Damnok Toek but especially the Poipet and Phnom Penh team who took good care of me for so many years. They helped me overcome all the obstacles of my life and to become who I am.



Chamroeun Kep center assistant, © 2018 Kathleen Hertel

10. THANK YOU

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Nathalie N'Guyen

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