



## EDUCATION SPONSORSHIP

# Newsletter

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## ISF's Future Plans

**ISF's Board of Trustees met in March this year to decide the future of the organization. It was agreed that through the amazing support and connections we've made we have the potential to help even more children.**

To do this, ISF plans to continue with the current education model which educates our students through our 'catch up' system, state school integration, vocational training / third level education and assistance with job placements. In addition to education we will continue to maintain the children health, monitor their welfare, support students with learning difficulties and provide support to students with learning difficulties and provide all students with extra curricular activities such as P.E., art, yoga, library classes, traditional Khmer dance and English lessons. Our plan is to build the Stung Meanchey Educational Centre to a maximum of 450 students. By capping the number it will ensure that we can give individual attention to all the children and provide for them sufficiently. Each year ISF will replace the number of children in the 'catch up' system in line with the number of children graduating to the state school.

In addition to assisting our students, ISF's social working team will continue to help the parents with education opportunities and trainings, introduced them to services available to them, provide links with agencies who provide training and job placements and through support in overcoming daily challenges they are faced with. All of this greatly contributes to a better family life which reduces interruptions to the children's education.

In order to make the Stung Meanchey Education Centre more sustainable and stable, ISF will purchase some land and build a new education centre to eliminate the risk created when renting premises.

ISF's Trustees recognize that we have created an excellent working model which has the potential to reach many more children. For this reason it was decided to extend our services by opening a second Educational Centre with the same community structure and focus. It is planned that this Centre will be in another area of Phnom Penh to allow us to leverage existing skills and so both Centers could support each other. The plan is to start with 60 children and grow it from there to a maximum of 450 students. Research will be undertaken in 2011 to establish the area most in need of our services. The aim will be to open the second centre in 2012 so watch this space!



# ISF Students rewarded with a trip to Phnom Penh Zoo

Many children in Cambodia don't have the opportunity to enjoy the activities that are taken for granted elsewhere in the world. ISF wants its children to have a childhood filled with great memories of fun activities – like visiting the Zoo. Here's a report from Volunteer Alex Hammer about ISF's recent trip to the Zoo.

After weeks of anticipation, it was finally the day all the ISF kids got to visit Phnom Tamao Zoo! Each year the children of ISF are treated to a trip to one of the local attractions and this year their choice was the zoo! Dressed in their best outfits the kids loaded up on the bus 30 minutes before it was time to leave just to make sure they were not left behind.



Entertainment en route to the zoo was provided by our 13-year-old MC, Ping Pong who had the whole bus singing Karaoke. With so much excitement, the microphone was really not necessary however, apparently an essential prop to their performances. Huge thanks to The British International School Shanghai for teaching our kids songs other than Justin Bieber songs!!

With the Cambodian top ten chart songs and the national anthem out of our system,

everyone piled out of the bus for the big day. For all of our children and many of the staff, this was the first time they had been to the zoo.

Many of the children were apprehensive as to whether or not animals such as the lions would be roaming around the grounds!! Once it was established who could outrun the lions, it was safe to begin our visit of the zoo

Kate (possibly the biggest kid of the lot!!!) got her thrills startling not only the children but also the teachers by hiding out in a hollowed out statue of a bear which is normally used for people to put their faces into and take photos to remember their day out at the zoo. Kate spent most of the morning hidden in it and roaring as everyone walked past!! Once everyone got over the fright they were brave enough to get close to the animal enclosures. Unfortunately, our volunteer and a group of the kids were a little too brave with the monkey enclosure. To get a better look, Alex and the kids got close, however the monkey had the same intentions and wanted some company in his cage... Screams could be heard throughout the zoo. Over lunch, a unanimous decision by the children was made that the lions and bears (in spite of Kate!) were the highlight of the zoo and that monkeys are best seen safely from an arms length distance.

Everyone was so exhausted from their exciting adventure at the zoo that the only noises to be heard on the bus ride home were giggles from those who had not yet fallen asleep. Since our trip to the zoo, all art classes have been consumed with paintings and drawings of their favorite animals, a hint that they would like to go back soon.





## ISF Library opens full time!

**In January 2011 our social workers informed us that a number of the older students we support through**

**the local state school were at risk of stopping their education. This was due to their age being older than the grade they are currently studying and their parents requiring the students to contribute financially to the family.**

At the same time the arrival of UWCSEA East's Librarian, Katie, to assist our staff with training found us a solution to the challenge for 2 of these older students. Katie took this opportunity to evaluate our library, took all the books that were of no use out and donated them to another NGO here, showed us how to display the books so that the children could make better



use of our library and made recommendations for further improvements. In addition to this, she and some friends committed to starting a book club in Singapore and through it raise the funds to sponsor a full time librarian.

In order to combat the risk of our older students discontinuing their education, we decided to hire 2 of the girls part time which would allow them to continue their studies for the other half of the day. They were both sent on a librarian training course and were employed part time in March.

The girls have also received further assistance from a volunteer from Australia who will be working with them individually to help improve their computer and English skills. This will also assists them in their future employment as they will have basic office skills.

The improvement of this project to our Education Programme now allows all our children full time access to a much appreciated resource. Before this, the children only had access during scheduled classes in the curriculum. Now each day in the library is a hum of children reading and imaginations expanding.

## UWCSEA teachers training

**Our focus up until the end of 2010 was to ensure the programmes we have in place are structurally sound. Having achieved this, our focus this year is to improve the capacity and skills of the staff running these programs.**

Through UWCSEA East, we have received a commitment that they will provide teacher training to all of our teachers three times a year. Already, ISF teachers have received training twice in 2011 from the UWCSEA East teachers. The first training took place in January and taught the teachers practical science, math and art skills thanks to Mario, Rob, Karen and Margot.

During the second teacher training in May, Jackie, Andrea and Julie came to share with our teachers some of

the skills they have learned over the years that are required to deal with difficult behaviors in the classroom. Our teachers were also shown how to use positive reinforcements and reward systems in order to get the most out of the children in the most positive and beneficial way.

The trainings were greatly appreciated by the ISF teachers who started to put the new skills to work immediately throughout the school and already positive changes have been observed in the children.

In addition to this UWCSEA's librarian, Katie came into ISF and revamped our library by culling any of the books that were of no benefit to or were beyond the ability or the age of the children that we are serving. She also



structured the library in such a way that it opened up the opportunity for us to hire two part time librarian to run this project.

ISF is extremely grateful for the relationship with UWCSEA and sincerely appreciate all those who have come so far this year. We look forward to the next lot of training and the positive benefits it will bring.

Thanks!

# ISF's P.E Project

In mid 2010 one of ISF's supporters Jeff Haskell celebrated his 40th Birthday. He asked his friends to make donations to ISF rather than buy him presents and the result has been the implementation of a full PE curriculum into our current education programme.

Previously, PE classes consisted of 'Army style drills' which were torture to watch! They were certainly not in any way appealing or stimulating to the children. As a result many of the children refused to participate, some claiming illness!!!

Using the funding received from Jeff and his friends, we were able to purchase training uniforms and runners for all of the children in our catch up program. In addition to this, each class was supplied with their own box full of sporting equipment, including footballs, skipping ropes and many other items to allow the children to participate in fun activities.

To ensure the maintenance of the sporting equipment, we purchased a trophy named "Tomorrow Trophy", which we have named after Tom Morrow (one of the biggest contributors to Jeff's birthday donations) and with the intention that the children will think of tomorrow when using the equipment and therefore look after it. Any equipment broke is replaced; however anything that is 'misplaced' will only be replaced at the end of each quarter. After this time, the class who has looked after their equipment the best receives the trophy for the following three months.

Training of the teachers was provided by Hearts of Gold NGO who in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, currently train all of the schools in the Cambodian Provinces with an interactive, interesting PE program. The teachers in Phnom Penh aren't expected to receive the training for another year thanks to Jeff and Tom, we've been able to fast track that. The training is ongoing and will allow our teachers to receive specialized training to ensure that the equipment is put to best use, and ensure that the children are now entertained and stimulated in P.E. class whilst at the same time having fun.

In addition the funding is covering the cost of our yoga classes. In 2009 the ISF students started a yoga programme through Karma Yoga Cambodia that has provided huge benefits to the children and is greatly enjoyed.

I had the pleasure of being invited to observe a P.E. class last week. Not only were the children fully engaged and involved, every child was giggling and enjoying themselves. It was evident that the new program has made a massive difference to what we at ISF are already doing.

Sincere thanks to Tom and Jeff for putting lots of smiles on lots of little faces!



# ISF State School children still number 1!

In October 2010 ISF funded 72 children through the local state school.

Some of these children have since transferred to receiving vocational training and some have gained employment. A total of 64 are continuing with their studies and set to progress to the next grade level in October 2011. Of these students, 5 are currently ranked number one in their class.

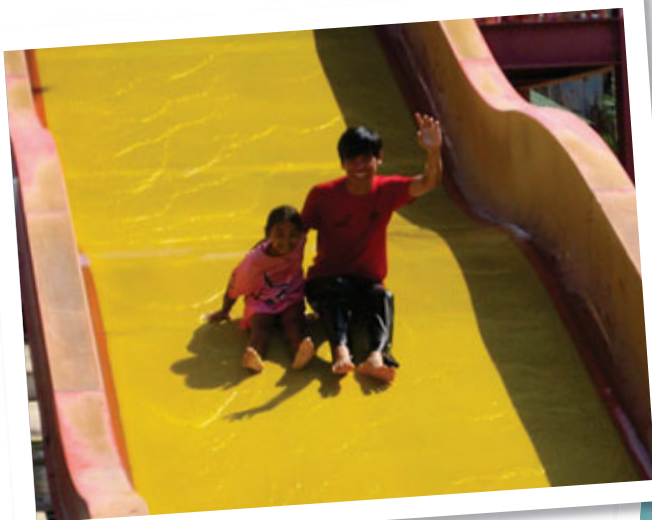
This year the ISF children again achieved the number one status at the local State School. Their high attendance rate, and study within the class enabled them to maintain ISF's top position at the State School for the third year running!

Although all of these children were proud of themselves, more important was the discussions on how they wanted to celebrate their achievement. After lengthy debates, a unanimous decision by all was that the Phnom Penh water park was so much fun last year, it just had to be done again!

The children who had been to the water park last year, showed the others including the ISF staff, the best and fastest way to fly down the huge water slide, and the prime position in the wave pool. As a result, it was hard to distinguish the ISF staff from the children, and who was having more fun!! The staff were up and down the slides more times than all the children put together! Everyone was having so much fun, that no one wanted to get out of the pool for the picnic lunch!

Since the water park, all of the State School Children have made it their mission to retain ISF's top position for a 4th year running. The ISF staff have also made it their mission to keep the children at the number one position to ensure they will have another trip to the Water Park too!!

With so many ISF children eligible to attend the local State School next year, and promises by the current students to remain at number one status, we are contemplating hiring out the whole water park!



# Vocational Training

In 2010 it became evident that some of our older students were under pressure to gain employment to support their families financially. This would result in the end of their education. ISF commenced a project to fund basic vocational training. Where possible this is provided alongside the youths current education but in some cases it is provided in place of it. The result is better employment opportunities for our students.

To date ISF has helped some of our students with vocational training in Motorbike Mechanics, Beauty Therapy & Hairdressing, Film Making Training and Football Coach Training.

As more of our students are reaching an age where they are considering employment, ISF will now research all vocational training, job placement opportunities and apprenticeships available to them. A comprehensive programme for our students aged 15 to 20 years will be established to assist them in obtaining gainful employment that will help break the cycle of poverty they are currently living in.



## Thank you

ISF's operation in Cambodia is now run by a core team of 11 full time staff who all undertake a vital role to ensure the charity runs efficiently, the service provided continues to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and opportunities to develop the work of the charity are taken. The staff team work together in an office located within the ISF school building which ensures they are in touch with the charity's beneficiaries and are best placed to respond to the needs of the children and their families. Ten of the team members are Cambodian nationals who, through the employ of ISF, have been able to develop their skills and competence to meet the demands of a developing charity.

ISF was very fortunate to have Phil Armstrong via the Goldman Sachs Gives program sponsor the salaries of 6 of these staff members from October 2010 until August 2011. We wish to express our sincere thanks to Phil and Goldman Sachs for their generosity.

## Volunteers

*"We arrived in Phnom Penh not knowing what to expect and we settled in very quickly thanks to the help of all the staff, teachers and children at ISF. The two months we spent in Cambodia were challenging but incredibly rewarding; it was an experience we will never forget. Despite the language barrier we learnt so much from the Cambodian people and the charity who have opened our eyes to a completely different world. ISF is an inspiring organisation that aids so many children that do really need the help. The school was so welcoming towards us and immediately made us feel at home in an environment so different from our own. We would like to thank Kate and all the staff at ISF for giving us such a fulfilling and insightful experience that will stay with us forever. There is no doubt that one day we will return to visit everyone who showed us so much hospitality and kindness."*

Volunteer Testimonial from Lucy Williams & Abey Bass

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