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So Samlot, thanks to the sponsorship scheme started by NHS patrons Fran and Jon Digges, can stay on at home and in school.

NHS Computer Skills Centre, nicknamed the Koala Centre, was set up with funding from AusAid.

Opportunities

Rewarding careers for personal and family wellbeing

No family will ever make a comfortable living even if they own a typical small 5 hectare farm. No matter how hard they work, they will only produce a modest supply of food and income in a good harvesting year. Successful advocacy, better diversified livelihoods, will help to keep them out of poverty, which NHS members fully appreciate given their past. But it will do little more. Families would struggle in a bad year, with not enough "set-aside" to see them through.

At NHS we believe our members should enjoy more comfortable, secure and fulfilled living with long-term solutions to cope with ageing disabled and disadvantaged family members. Most do not have state social service benefits in Cambodia, some have very small ones, so by tradition we rely on our younger generations. We have to create new opportunities for them to fulfill their obligations while leading their own full lives.



Happy in old age?

Pathfinders to new Horizons

All our members know about real poverty and leading isolated lives, confined in or around their homes, in rural areas with poor transport, infra-structure, and without electricity. They are at the start of the path, as you see in our logo. The purpose of this programme is to illuminate the path ahead and provide the means for the journey.

Cambodia has had recent promising economic growth, but it has not led to "new horizons" for its poorest and most vulnerable families. Conversely there are severe human resource skills-shortages in the country. These could be filled by the families of our members if given the chance. NHS members seek to create ways for their families to join the educated and professional classes and they are equally entitled to do this as other families. How do we take on those challenges?

1. *The first task is to ensure full schooling for children. This is achieved with modest grants to poor families and effective local advocacy to minimize non-attendance and drop-outs especially of girls.*



So Samlot, looking younger than her 18 years, is a heroine. She is the sole carer of her disabled widowed mother. She wants to be a teacher and almost lost the chance. Like so many daughters of poor rural families, she was to be "placed" in domestic work in Phnom Penh. Too many girls find such jobs are at best mere hard labour and servitude. At worst they are forced routes in to prostitution.

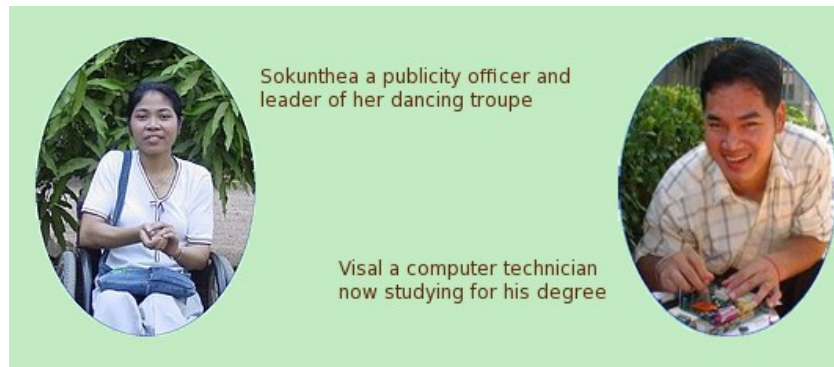
2. *The next task is to provide basic skills in modern technology, language, and preparation for careers, job-applying etc.*

NHS Computer Skills Centre opened in August 2004. Ming Price (right) taught the first intake. Rithy (left) who was a former student of Ming Price from Teacher Training College, Kandal, is now the centre's computer teacher. Computing skills, more than any others, open up work and worldly opportunities.



3. *The final task is to ensure they are then eligible and fairly treated for available opportunities, earning jobs on merit.*

Two examples of young people are shown briefly here. More can be read about them in "human stories." Each has pioneered his or her own way to a new horizon. Both serve as inspiration for So Samlot and others, at the start of their journey or waiting in hope.



When these all come together successfully, **"ability"** not disability is proven to matter. It lays to rest once and for all the traditional prejudice against disabled people. As **"opportunities"** must be pursued wherever they exist, this programme as with the advocacy one, has a national dimension allowing for young people from Kampong Chhnang to move to Phnom Penh to any other province, and for equally deserving residents from elsewhere to be included, on a manageable basis, and where no similar initiative can be found for them.

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