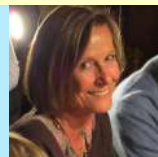




.... There are few areas in the world where one witnesses so brilliantly the transformation from little ragamuffins into school children ... for a better, more fruitful life ...
(M. James Morris, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme, after his visit to PSE).



Editorial

Ghislaine Dufour,
President

A very unusual year ends. For the past seven months, the PSE Centre has not reverberated with the shouts and laughter of children who, here, have the opportunity to put aside their cares and to build their future. During this health crisis, the teams have remained at their posts and have pursued their mission, supporting families who have been impacted by the pandemic, and whose many have seen their hardships multiply two or three times over.

Since October, life, as it is, has resumed for students, though with strict hygiene and health guidelines in place and reducing of class sizes and hours of teaching. However, teachers make sure that students keep up with the programme. School continuity, they learned it during the confinement.

None of this would be possible without your support, all of you who read this newsletter. We thank you for that. As you know, PSE thrives through the generosity of its sponsors and donors. The health crisis disrupted our fundraising projects. Marie-France was not able to undertake her annual tour, to make you dream with the images and stories of this amazing adventure that allows, each year, hundreds of youngsters, who might not have had a future, to settle into adult lives with a diploma and become development agents of their country.

Volunteers of the PSE network, organised into 26 branches, have retooled so they can continue to meet, using videoconferencing. As we were not being able to invite you all to meet us face-to-face, we proposed you to do it around a screen and watch a programme transmitted from both France and Phnom Penh, wonderfully hosted by Frédéric Lopez. Be sure to mention it to your friends who may not know about PSE. It really conveys the vision of a better world, that all of us need today.

Rendez-vous with Frédéric Lopez - The replay



"So inspiring!"

"We cried, laughed, smiled and we didn't want it to stop."

"An explosion of optimism and energy."

"Marvellous emotion-filled moments, so beautifully hosted by Frédéric Lopez"...

On 11th October we aired, on social media, a really beautiful "solidarity programme", interactive between Paris and Phnom Penh, hosted by Frédéric Lopez.

It is available in replay!

Get it on <https://www.pse.org/live>

Thank you and welcome to everyone who has joined the PSE family through this show! Help us get the word out about our action by sharing the REPLAY with your friends ... so that they too can discover this beautiful story! Thanks to all of you.

"A problem ... a solution",

that is how Frédéric Lopez summarises PSE. .

And it is true that it is our DNA. It is the way PSE has been built, following the problems we faced. And putting in pictures, too, is part of our DNA: Papy, was passionate about images, he always took photos, then he also filmed, to let others know about the situations. That is what the annual tours are about: travel widely and show, to look for support.

So, naturally, logically, the idea came out for this digital interactive show to replace the annual tour. Frédéric Lopez kindly volunteered to host it, as did the others involved, and our School of Media, created by Papy, launched into the unknown.

A passionate excitement united the Dean of the school, Nicolas, the teachers and students on this common project with such high stakes, a "live" interactive show put on by an NGO and its students: a first, here, in Cambodia!

In collaboration with our team from the headquarters, with Aloest (producer of the film "Little Gems"), with the Communication Department here, and with many other teams, they had to understand the mechanics of the operation, find a way to transmit the images to France and to receive theirs, design the flow of the show, imagine, write, film and edit the reports, plan the set, solve countless technical problems, prepare the speakers, test, start all over again ... 5 intense weeks, of a preparation where almost everything had to be discovered.

All of them, unanimously, tell us: "we are happy and proud of the result! This experience taught us much about the technical challenges. It was a fabulous practical exercise, this Practice that is the basis of teaching at PSE. And, in addition, it allowed us to unite the team even more, by bringing students and teachers together. Each of us, we dream of renewing this kind of adventure! "



Going back to school in stages

From 22nd September, the week was devoted to training in the measures of the sanitary Protocol, learning the rules of circulation in the Centre, the major interior and exterior cleaning and, on Saturday morning, to the anti-mosquito sprays during which I was asked to go for a walk elsewhere then, on Sunday, to the disinfection against the virus.



And, on 28th September, after an absence of 6½ months, 61 youngsters from level 9 (3rd) were finally able to return, while 471 students in the 2nd year of Vocational Training were able to resume their Practical classes and 156 of them to return to the boarding school, but at 6 per room instead of 12 ... The following week, on 5th October, 335 children from levels 1 and 2 (CP and CE1), from Year 1 (CP-CE1), and 2 (CE2-CM1), as well as 79 boarders, were reunited with PSE.

And exams already...

On 4th and 5th November, the official Vocational Training exams: Certificate 1 (= 2nd Pro) for 401 students and, for 362 others, Certificates 2 (= 1st Pro) and 3 (= Bac Pro), as well as the BTS and Bachelor Degrees - with inspections by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

But, at the time of putting to press, we learn, unfortunately, that the schools have to close again, for 2 weeks ... Let's hope it won't be longer!!!

Our youngsters are thinking of you - by Karuna



I was so happy that I was coming with Mamie on the tour, but we could not come. Because of the coronavirus, there are many problems in Cambodia, especially in poor families because people do not have jobs anymore. Already that they do not earn much..., it is very difficult. But there are also big problems in your country and, above all, many sick people and people who have died. We have also been told that you are no longer allowed to go out, once again. So, we think a lot about you because it must be very difficult. Even if there are problems here, we know that you also have many problems. And we thank you even more, for still keeping on helping us. We hope you can come and see us later on, because we would like to thank you, personally. I want to tell you that without you, we would not be able to study for a good job and it would still be destitution.



To continue studying

The main goal of PSE, after feeding the children, which at the very beginning was their first request ("one meal a day"), is to send them to school - their 2nd request ("go to school like the other children", they told us).

So, faced with the obligation to close the Centre, like many, we have put in place measures so that teaching could continue.

It is vital for our children who have no other chance to one day escape the destitution in which their families are stuck for lack of the opportunity to learn. How then can we consider waiting and doing nothing? There is a real urgency!

That said, we had to juggle, because most of our families are not digitally equipped and therefore distance learning does not work for everyone. And even if some have succeeded in setting aside a good portion of an already very meagre budget to buy a second-hand mobile phone, their neighbourhoods do not always have an adequate connectivity.



As the last newsletter showed you, we therefore had to provide alternatives to the online courses, using paper-based solutions, with weekly meetings between students and teachers, sometimes in small groups, but always under secure health conditions.

A big bravo and a huge thank you to all our teachers and to all the teams concerned, who struggled without counting not to abandon the mission of PSE, even in unusual and not always simple conditions!!!

Thank you everyone!

I think all of you will join Ghislaine, our President, and me, in thanking those who continued to work during this long and difficult period that we have just experienced in a Centre for children without children!

Thanks to our leadership duo, of course, Christine and Leakhéna; to our management team; to the Social Team, always on duty, close to the difficulties our families face; to the schools and teaching teams, who went above and beyond to ensure that teaching continued; to medical and accommodation teams; to all Support Services; to the team of guards, who guarantee security; to the sewing workshop team, who continued to manufacture uniforms, and masks, while moving the workshop; to our bus drivers who have double work because of the round trips in the middle of the day; to all of our sponsors and donors, still so loyal even in this difficult period; to all the friends of PSE, all over the world, who continued to raise funds, in the midst of the difficulties at home too..., a capital work when all the gatherings had to be cancelled.

The celebration in memory of Papy, who died 4 years ago, could not take place either, but he continues to watch over us.

And as if that weren't enough...



Yes, as if that weren't enough, the country was victim, in October, of a dramatic near end to the rainy season, coupled with tropical storms, with big floods which affected, of course, the most vulnerable, already heavily impacted by the consequences of the health crisis. When your house is made of a few boards laid directly on the ground and a nasty tarpaulin or piece of sheet metal for the roof, you are not well protected from strong gusts. But when you add the downpours that we have just experienced, and the streets without drains in an unequipped area, because you cannot afford to live elsewhere, not only do you get the rain, but the water comes in from the street to invade your house, sometimes up to more than a metre high...

So, once again, our families needed a helping hand! And our Social Team has, once again, found itself in the front line: food distribution, of course, but also assistance to move elsewhere until the water level drops, as well as providing essential equipment to replace what was lost.



Know your children

10 people at home. A father, died 10 years ago; a mother who harvests water spinach, always in rotten water; a married son, construction worker, who lives at home with his wife who also cuts water spinach, with two young children; an uncle who makes barely \$2 a day; a 72-year-old grandmother; 3 daughters: one of 18, starting high school, and 2 of 15, in middle school. With \$1.75 per person per day, they survive but there is no question of going to school. We have just taken in the 3 daughters to our Vocational Training programme.



They live in the countryside in an old house with leaking walls and roof. The father is a construction worker. With his daily \$5, insufficient and irregular, they are among the poorest (\$0.83 per person per day). The mother, a farmer, barely has any income. There are 3 children aged 14, 11 and 9, and one older daughter of 16, who has just been taken as a boarder into our Vocational Training programme.

The parents, construction workers, like their son, who practically never received an education. His sister, however, took her Baccalaureate a year ago, but they can't afford sending her to university. She has been accepted in our Vocational Training and is boarding since her family lives too far away.



A father who left. Without income or schooling, mother and children are living with relatives. The mother tries to find work... We proposed her to do a training programme for adults (FLIP) with a per diem; her 2 daughters of 11 and 13 are admitted to our Remedial School and the youngest 4-year-old into kindergarten.

4 children. A mother sick at home and a father selling palm juice. The 2 youngest are in primary school. The n°1, 19, stopped school in grade 4 to study Korean in a company to which he will owe \$7,500 after his studies! The 2nd one, 17 years old, is also ready to give up after grade 4 but was recently admitted as a boarder into our Vocational Training.



These families manage, just about, to feed themselves and try to put their children through school, but after a while, they cannot keep up. In a very quickly evolving society, it is absolutely necessary to take over, so that the children may have access to a proper vocational training, the only solution to break the cycle of destitution. This is what our families expect from us, from you...

What has become of them?



Nang Vannak. Her father, a motorcycle mechanic and moto taxi driver since they left the countryside, was unable, despite his 2 jobs, to sustain his family of 9. By chance, he heard about PSE, who took in his children. Vannak, the 4th child, started school in 2nd grade in State school since she was not late and received one meal a day. She was an excellent student and could, afterwards, enter our Accounting Training. Back then, there were not as many training courses as there are now. When she received her diploma, she did not immediately start working since she was a part of the National Taekwondo team and her trainer asked her to train for 6 months for the national tournament.

Then, she got a job as an accountant, the 1st job she applied for! She stayed there for a year, in an administrative role, then was hired by the Chamber of International Commerce of Cambodia as responsible for accounting and administration; 2 roles at once as they were understaffed. On top of her administrative functions, her work consisted of events organisations and lots of socializing. Even if it was hard at the beginning, she held on to continue progressing. For her, "PSE is like a sun that shines light on children to push them to follow their paths to help them achieve their goals and arrive at their destinations. At PSE, she says, we learn to be independent, to be confident citizens, to not be ashamed of who we are. We are encouraged to pursue the paths we desire and not those that are imposed on us". With this positive mindset, she is already thinking about her future plans. Bravo, Vannak!

Happy holidays and a happy New Year 2021,
hoping it will be less complicated than 2020!

