

# the green gecko project

where kids can be kids and dreams can come true



annual report 2010

# the green gecko project

“ As we enjoyed another awesome Gecko party to celebrate our 5th birthday in July this year, we couldn't help but reflect on how far we've come since our small beginnings in 2005.

None of this would have been achieved without the fantastic support of so many people who believe in and support the work that we do.

Thank you to all of our Gecko friends (near and far!), our fundraisers and donors, our staff and volunteers, our families, and not forgetting the most important of them all... the Gecko kids for embracing every opportunity that comes their way.

All of us at Green Gecko are so thankful for the support of you all - our big extended Gecko family!

- Tania and Rem



The Green Gecko Project is a **home, school and family** for 70 children who previously lived and begged on the streets of Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Green Gecko provides **security, education, love and opportunities** to these children through their formative years and into their adult lives, empowering them to achieve their full potential.

Green Gecko strives to **break the begging cycle** by supporting the children's families and the broader community through long term health, education and training initiatives.

The project has evolved into what it is today by responding to **the needs of our children and families**. We believe that this important factor has been crucial in ensuring the success of the work that we do.



# 2010 in numbers

1645

nutrition packs provided for the community



3

toilets built for families without previous sanitation



840

hours of social work training provided to our childcare workers



8215

kilos of rice included in nutrition packs



8

Gecko kids ranked in the top 3 of their class for the school year



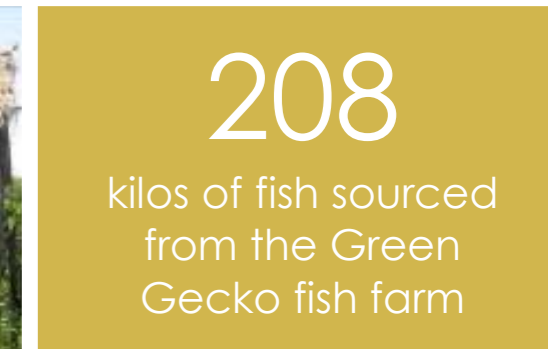
6

houses rebuilt and repaired



208

kilos of fish sourced from the Green Gecko fish farm



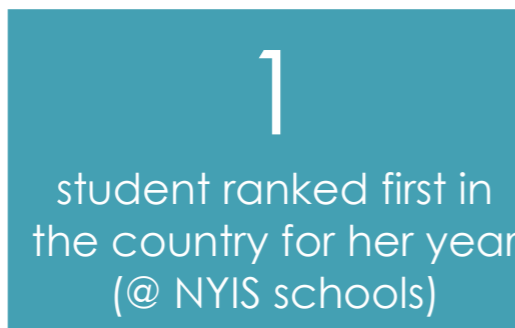
46

teenage relationship, health and sexuality workshops held



836

social work outreach visits



1

student ranked first in the country for her year (@ NYIS schools)

140

family visits to Green Gecko outreach centre in the past six months



379

hospital clinic visits for Gecko kids, families and staff



# 2010 goals achieved

# and other milestones

## did we do it?

Yes we did! ☺ Monitoring and evaluation is critical at Green Gecko, to be sure we are headed in the right direction and achieving what we set out to do. Here is a list of our major goals from last year and the results we achieved. Naturally, we are as pleased as punch with the outcome.



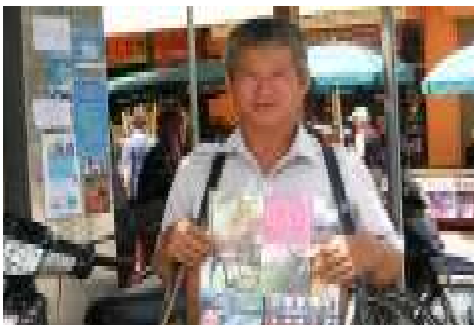
### Outreach House - 100% achieved

Only 50 meters away from the Gecko gates, but far enough to keep the dramas at bay... our new Outreach House provides a safe space for outreach work, Khmer literacy classes, counselling, community meetings and more. ✓



### Full time nurse - achieved after re-evaluation

After interviewing many qualified nurses, we realised what we actually needed was a carer. In Cambodia, nurses don't provide the care they do in the western world, they just dispense medicine. We have a doctor to do this, so what we did was hire a carer instead. Welcome aboard Sren! ✓



### First family free from welfare - 300% achieved

Not one, but three families are no longer receiving welfare and are proudly standing on their own two feet with the success of their microbusinesses. Congratulations to Pita's family, Kory's family and Vireak's family on their achievements! ✓



### First high school graduate - 200% achieved

Not only one, but two! We are very pleased to announce that Davvy and Pita both successfully graduated high school. Davvy has enrolled in Paul Dubrule Hotel and Tourism School and Pita is off to university! ✓

## Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards

We were proud and excited to learn that a strong contingent from Green Gecko was once again invited to attend the NYIS Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards for 2010.

To be invited to the awards, students needed to have placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in their class for the year. Eight of our Geckos were amongst Cambodia's brightest to receive their awards from the Ministry of Education. In addition, we were delighted to learn Pichet won first place in Grade 7 for the entire country in a separate exam.

Congratulations to Pichet, Kim Suan, Ni Preab, Rayou, Thai, Kunthea, Srey Nao and Nott on a fantastic job!



## Drumming workshop

One of those chance activities that finds its way to our gates by way of an awesome volunteer, Garry, drumming therapy resulted in some amazing beneficial outcomes for the kids. In true Gecko style, hip hop beats seemed to find their way in towards the end, too. Thank you, Garry and YSAS!



## Visitors hut and Gecko gift shop

Gecko now boasts a visitors hut, where we are able to display our gift shop wares and comfortably explain our aims, goals and achievements to all who enter our gates during visiting hours. Thanks to the dedicated support, funding and building prowess of the One Percent Club from Australia for making it happen!



## The next level!

BIG congratulations to 64 Gecko kids - boys, girls, young and old - who passed their first level exam in their traditional martial art class of bokator. All have graduated from a white krama to a green krama. A day filled with sweat, hard work, happiness and pride... with a few tears of joy shed by more than one.



# proud moments

# ...and fun times



## Our warrior girls bring home the silver medal

The 2010 National Bokator Championships held in Phnom Penh saw the raw girl power of Sophy, Chieng Eng and Nott receive the rewards of their hard work by being awarded the silver medal for their 'short stick' performance.



## International Women's Day - 8 March 2010

Green Gecko and Sangkheum Centre united to celebrate and honour the women of Cambodia for International Women's Day. Nott and Pichet delivered a speech on the importance of the day, which also included poems, questions and answers and performances by the Sangkheum girls (Tivea Brapey, a traditional Khmer dance showcasing femininity and elegance) and the Gecko girls (a powerful display of the strength and determination of Cambodian women through bokator).



## Invited to perform bokator for the Minister of Sport

If the Minister's reaction was anything to go by, Gecko stole the Cambodian martial arts show in Phnom Penh with their 'girls beating the gangsters' bokator demonstration. Gecko was the only team to accompany its performance with live traditional Khmer music, again, performed by the Gecko kids.



## Thy chooses to give blood

As a reward for some amazing work and dedication, the Gecko kids were allowed some free time one afternoon in November to do whatever made them happy. Our big boy Thy, chose to donate blood at Angkor Hospital for Children! There is a lot of superstition about giving blood in Cambodia so people rarely do it and there is always a shortage as a result.

Thy, you showed your value with this kind and brave gesture. We love you for your heart... thank you for being you!

## Pirates, ransom and a damsel in distress

Pirates, treasure hunt, intrigue hold the imagination of all children, and the Gecko kids were no different when they viewed a video of one of Gecko's own crew being kidnapped and held for ransom by pirates. Hunting for clues left by the pirates throughout Siem Reap city and the temples of Angkor, the kids successfully completed challenges along the way, solving the puzzle and finding their beloved volunteer Nele. The kids then ruthlessly brought the pirates to justice with a walk off the plank at the Gecko fish farm!

## Keeping our planet blue and green

An environmental education collaboration with the Sam Veasna Center for Conservation turned out to not only be informative, but a whole lot of fun! The aim of the course was to raise the kids awareness of Cambodia's natural heritage focusing as an example on the Tonle Sap lake, the threats to that natural heritage and the consequences for Khmers and the conservation efforts that are being made by Government, NGO's and local people. Theory classes were held weekly at the SVC headquarters, but the highlight was certainly their day trip to the Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary!

## Olympic fever hits Green Gecko

From registration table and competitor lanyards to cheer squad banners and painted faces, there was no stone unturned in preparing for the Green Gecko Olympics.

National anthems were sung, the athletes' oath was pledged, big gold medallions were crafted and awarded for athletic performance, coaching excellence, opening ceremonies and closing ceremonies... we had it all. In true Gecko style, all contestants were winners. It was a most fabulous day and in our minds... the best Olympic Games ever!



# working with our families

## it's not just the kids that are doing well!

Much of the work at Green Gecko goes into the families we work with. We believe to achieve long lasting results, we need to work holistically with the entire family, not just the children. Family planning remains one of our hardest hurdles to tackle. 2010 was our most successful year yet with so much positive progress being made by our dedicated social work team.

Green Gecko families:	Target	Actual	Success ratio
No longer receiving rental welfare	1	6	600%
Attending preventative health workshops	20	23	115%
Accessing health care funded by Green Gecko	32	32	100%
Choosing to live in locations with access to clean water	17	27	159%
Engaged in micro-businesses or vocational training	6	9	150%
Choosing to access family planning support	20	4	20%
Siblings attending National Khmer school	5	15	300%

## some family successes

**The Mao family:** Dad has started his first ever vocational training at Grace House woodwork school and is overwhelmed with his sense of achievement. Mum is employed by Green Gecko as an aunty to the toddlers.

**The Chan family:** Mum has her own fruit stall. Older sister is rearing pigs and chickens.

**The Sothi family:** Dad has earned sufficient money from selling the Green Gecko NYUM BAI cookbook to enable his family to purchase land at his home village. The mum and dad have 'retired' from selling books on the street and have returned to farming.

**The Savorn family:** Mum has four pigs and cane juice business.

**The Moug family:** Mum employed at Green Gecko as a kitchen hand and attending Green Gecko's adult Khmer literacy class.

**The Nan family:** Dad has started vocational training at Grace House woodwork school and is loving it.

**The Meak family:** Mum is employed at Green Gecko as a cook after the passing of her husband, leaving her alone with ten children. Older brother released from jail and is now attending Green Gecko's adult Khmer literacy class... so is mum.



Special thanks to Dennis K. Johnson for capturing these wonderful family photos.

# investing in our kids

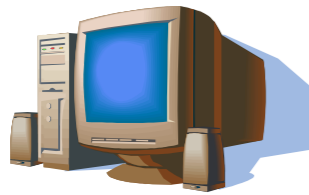
## broadening horizons through Gecko activities

In addition to Khmer school and English classes, the Gecko kids expand their awareness of the world around them and **enrich their educational experiences** through our Gecko activities programs, which includes classes in Library, Computers, Me and My Planet, Expressive Arts, Khmer Literacy, Khmer Media, Logics, Movie Club and Communications. Our Gecko activities are based around themes, which **create connections** between the skills, experience and knowledge of our Khmer teaching staff, our western volunteers and the children.

### Subjects in 2010 included:



People around the world



Technology



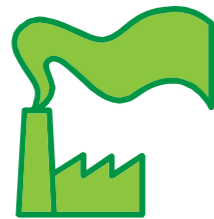
Media



Global warming



The Olympics



Chemicals and pollution



Nutrition and food



Keeping our planet green and blue



# investing in our crew

## empowering our staff through capacity building

23

**Full time Khmer staff:** House parents, aunties and uncles (carers), social workers, nurse's aid, cooks, accountant, maintenance, manager

5

**Part time Khmer staff:** Teachers of bokator, traditional music, art, Khmer history, media, Khmer literacy

4

**Sponsored or self funded long term volunteers:** Education, communications and development coordinators

2010 saw our biggest investment yet in training and development for our Khmer staff.

### 1. KAROL+SETHA, Maryknoll (11 staff members)

Knowledge and reflection on life and sexuality through a holistic approach.

### 2. Management training, Possibilities World (2 staff members)

Leadership and initiative development, communication and clarity, trust and transparency, planning and prioritization, staff evaluation and performance appraisals.

### 3. Vulnerable Children, Social Services of Cambodia (4 staff members)

Knowing yourself, communicating effectively with children, understanding child development, child protection, positive discipline, developing healthy, happy children.

### 4. Living Values, Peace Cafe (9 staff members)

A comprehensive values-based educational program, Living Values trains staff on working with kids to become good listeners, find solutions, communicate effectively and show respect and good manners.

# gecko financials

## income

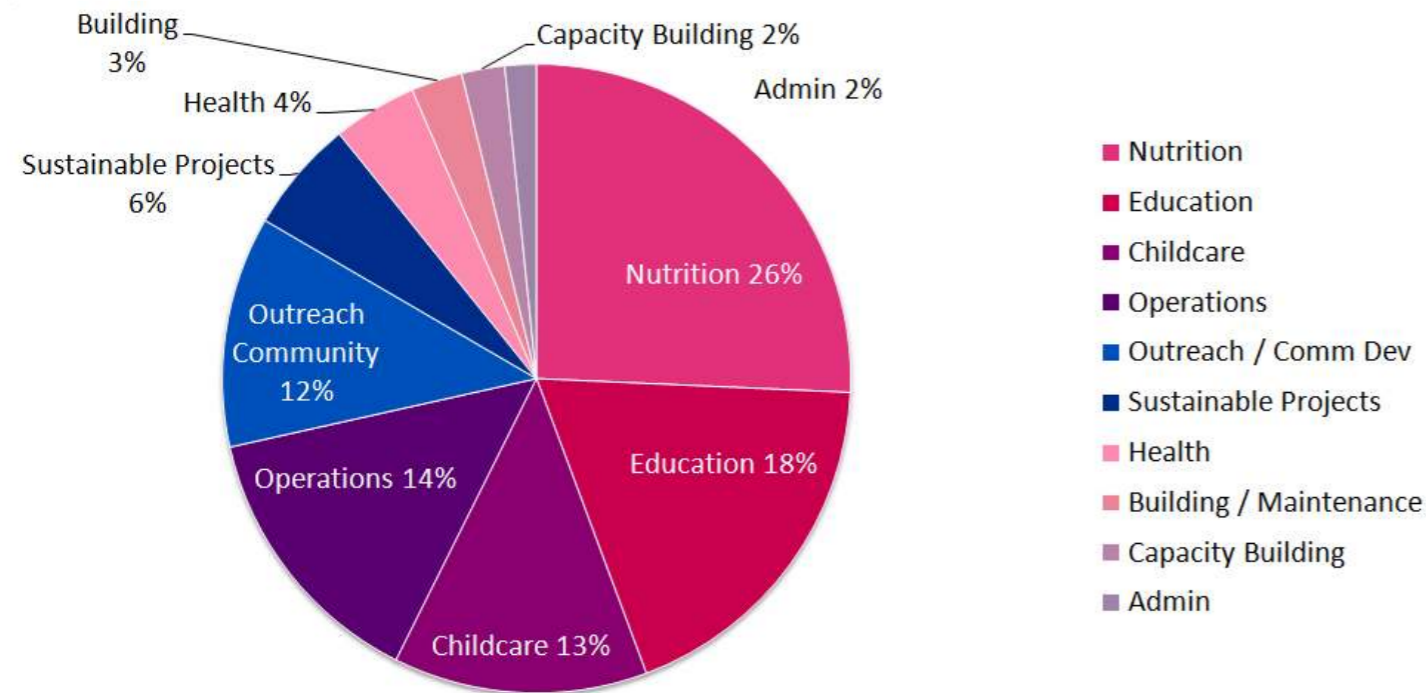
International donations and sponsorships	206,903.41
Visitor donations	36,204.81
Gift shop	19,627.92
Grants	14,962.52
Bokator performance	720.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>278,418.66</b>

**100%**

of general donations went directly to Gecko programs.

**0%**

of general donations went to western salaries



## where it goes

<b>NUTRITION</b> (fresh organic food daily, rice, fruit, purified water for children and staff)	70,620
<b>EDUCATION</b> (Khmer school, performance and art, bokator (martial arts), traditional music, Khmer history, English literacy, Khmer literacy)	51,155
<b>CHILDCARE</b> (house parents, uncle and aunties, children's clothing, shoes and accessories, hygiene products, recreational activities, blankets, mosquito nets and everyday essentials)	35,925
<b>OPERATIONS</b> (rent, gas, garbage, electricity... all the boring things)	38,788
<b>OUTREACH / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b> (outreach centre, micro business, social workers, Khmer literacy, nutrition packs for families, rice relief from flood and fire, donations to Women's Projects, external sponsorship in the community, family vocational training)	32,666
<b>SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS</b> (chicken farm, fish farm, visitors hut and gift shop)	15,947
<b>HEALTH</b> (hospital/clinic expenses and medicines, care worker for kids, staff and families)	11,889
<b>BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE</b> (pathways, reroofing, painting, fencing, shade areas and maintenance)	7,258
<b>CAPACITY BUILDING</b> (staff training: working with vulnerable children, sexual health and relationship education, management courses)	6,093
<b>ADMIN</b> (Khmer centre manager, bank fees, government charges)	4,449
<b>TOTAL RUNNING COSTS</b>	<b>274,789</b>

Our low admin charges are due to the fact that we pay no westerner from general donations, and all fees and charges are deducted before donations are received into our account here in Cambodia. To find out exactly how much of your dollar gets to us, please check out our donation page at [greengeckoproject.org](http://greengeckoproject.org).

Grand total expenditure for 2010 was \$302,289 which includes - a much needed and gratefully received Ford pick-up truck (ute) generously donated by Jarvis Ford, Adelaide Australia. All figures are in US dollars (because that's what we use here in Cambodia.)

# best thing about 2010?

# we ask the kids!



**Srey Nich (10)** :: Rem helped my mum move back to Siem Reap and give her a business so she can be close to us. When I go home on the weekends I help my mum doing job and I look after my little brother. We have a lot of animal come in the green gecko. We have cats, dogs, chicken, bird, bees, mouse, ants, Caterpillar, and a lot of jai (lice)!



**Vireak (12)** :: Our House Uncles and Aunties go study in Phnom Penh to learn how to be great carers.



**Hounam (11)** :: We have compost now and new rubbish bin. We put the plastic with the plastic and the compost with the compost. I think that's very good, it's good for the plants. When you put the plastic with the plants, the plastic cannot go away. It's good for us and it's good for the plants.



**Rayou (13)** :: In Khmer school I jumped from grade 2 to grade 4 because i studied hard. It made me so happy. My mum and dad were very happy.



**Tortna (12)** :: First I was buzzing bee, then Tania had the idea to put the small girls together. Now I am a fabulous frog. It is very good. It is so easy when we need new underwear (not shy to ask). We have our own province now, we choose a governor who put our name in the job and then we clean. When some people come to visit us they are surprise how clean the green gecko is!

**Srey Nar (13)** :: In Living Values we learn about to protect our self. Like at Khmer New Year when your father or mum is drinking a lot, then you don't go too close because they can hurt you. When we go to our house, and we get lost, we have to call Gecko, and watch out for the gangster. We can use bokator for the gangster.

**Kunthea (19)** :: We have a new chicken house and a vegetable garden, so we don't have to spent more money and we don't have to taste the chemicals for the bugs.

**Nicky (11)** :: The boys are in their group and the girls are in a different group. The boys and the girls cannot be together. Because we can love like brother and sister, but not like love in girlfriend and boyfriend.

**Yar (12)** :: I liked learning how to play the traditional drum, we do with bokator. It makes me feel good and happy. I really like to learn the drum.

**Ni Preab (17)** :: The new books in the library for Khmer. The books are really good, they teach us about the history and also about what is good and not good to do in your life.



# recognition & support

# gecko gratitude

## Support from The Intrepid Foundation

In September 2010, The Intrepid Foundation announced Green Gecko as one of its supported projects through the Intrepid Community Project Fund. The fund supports grassroots, non-government organisations identified by the Intrepid Foundation as making a valuable contribution to their local community. Intrepid had been working hard to find a project in Cambodia that supports disadvantaged children, as many of their travellers wanted to help the children of Cambodia. Their tour leaders are often asked to organise opportunities to visit children's centres and orphanages, and they wanted to educate their travellers about the negative effects of orphanage tourism while also providing a sustainable opportunity for their travellers to give back.

After a vigorous application process, including careful consideration of our policies on child protection, visiting hours and transparency and accountability, we were thrilled to learn that Intrepid had decided to support Green Gecko through their foundation.

All donations made to The Intrepid Foundation are matched by Intrepid Travel dollar for dollar, up to the value of AU\$300,000 per year and for a maximum of AU\$5,000 total per donor for the financial year. All costs are covered by Intrepid Travel. To make a donation through The Intrepid Foundation or to find out more about their work, head to [www.theintrepidfoundation.org](http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org).

## Keeping our Gecko friends in the loop

This year we have made huge efforts in developing technology so it is easy to stay in contact with our Gecko friends and supporters:



Gecko friends on our Facebook



friends signed up for our newsletter



views on YouTube for Kim Suan's story



The kids always say that Green Gecko is like **one big family**... and it's true. Our Gecko family is global, and it includes all of you! Everyone that has believed in us over the years: from every sponsor and skydiver to every friend, fundraiser and fun-runner, every volunteer and photographer to every gift-shopper and gift giver... every single one of you that has been there for us. **Thank you from the bottom of our Gecko hearts.**



Naturally we'd love to thank everyone individually but that would take another ten pages of fine print, and we fear we'd leave someone out. © You know who you are and so do we! To view some of our biggest contributors, please check out our Special Thanks page at [greengeckoproject.org](http://greengeckoproject.org).

# our goals for 2011

# how you can help



## Vocational training centre for women

As part of our commitment to developing skills and capacity amongst the Gecko families, we are now looking into options for a vocational training centre for women.



## New resources for fundraisers

In 2011, we aim to create innovative resources for our Gecko friends in schools, workplaces and community groups through our Kids Helping Kids project and to set up an option for individuals to open their own fundraising pages in Australia.



## Establishing a scholarship savings scheme

Our support for the Geckos doesn't end with high school! With your help, we would like to cover their further education costs, including tuition fees, accommodation and living expenses.



## Children's art exhibition in Singapore

Thanks to our friends at Hotel de la Paix, we are looking forward towards an exhibition of the kids' original artwork, to be generously hosted by the Irish Embassy in Singapore.



## Seek international accounting advice and auditing assessment

As part of our commitment to transparency and accountability, we would like to source an accounting volunteer to provide an assessment of our current accounting systems as well as training, mentoring and development for our office staff and finance team.



Just some of the ways you can help us reach these goals...

## Organise a Gecko fundraiser

Some of our biggest fundraising efforts - from fun runs and skydives to mufti days and Cambodian-themed feasts - have been led by passionate people just like you. Fundraising is easy to do and every effort is appreciated. Visit our website for resources and ideas to inspire, and to set up your own individual fundraising page.



## Become a Gecko supporter

There are many costs that go into supporting children, families and the wider community at Green Gecko. Could your organisation, business or family become a Green Gecko sponsor?



Support our ability to make a long-term, lasting difference in the lives of the Gecko kids and families by setting up an easy monthly credit card donation via our online websites in Australia, the US and the UK. With your ongoing commitment, we can break the begging cycle for good.



One-off donations are also appreciated and form a vital part of our funding. You can donate online by credit card or PayPal at [greengeckoproject.org](http://greengeckoproject.org). Bank account details are also available for direct deposit donations. Tax deductibility is available for our Australian and US donors, and Gift Aid applies for our friends from the UK.

## Go shopping

Purchase one of our fabulous Cambodian cookbooks or other quality gifts, on display in the visitors centre. You can also buy from our online gift store - why not buy a supporter's pack to give as corporate gifts or to support fundraising? All products are high quality with a groovy Green Gecko twist.





# “អរគុណ ធំៗ”

(Awkoon tom tom - Thank you big big!)



With much gratitude,

Gecko's founding directors:  
Rem Poun and Tania Palmer  
and all the Gecko kids, families and staff.

