

the green gecko project

where kids can be kids and dreams can come true



annual report 2011

the green gecko project

“

As we reached our sixth birthday in July, the Gecko crew and kids reflected back... four years ago, we marched en masse upon a swampy 1.25 acre former rice paddy. Nothing on the land except a crocodile pit, a broken concrete slab, lots of mud and water and one traditional house - but that didn't deter us. We had dreams and we had each other.

Four years on, with the love and support of our Gecko friends, these dreams are a reality. You only have to walk up to the gates to feel the pride and sense of ownership the kids have for their Gecko home. We have never had to hire cleaners or labourers, this is the kids place and every rock and shovel of dirt has been moved by them. Here in Cambodia chores are not burdens, they are the Cambodian way of life.

We were able to celebrate our sixth year with incredible pride and look forward to the next one unfolding.

- Tania and Rem

”



The Green Gecko Project **supports over 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.



2011 in numbers

1325

nutrition packs provided for the community



1

water pump installed to homes without water



3

families attended family life skills workshop



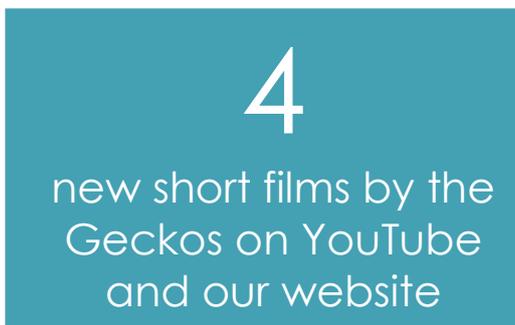
1

graduate of higher education (congrats Davvy!)



14

siblings sponsored to go to school



4

new short films by the Geckos on YouTube and our website



2058

kilos of fresh veggies provided to families to improve nutrition

22,755

kilos of rice delivered
to flooded
villages



6,302

cans of fish included
in emergency packs



8,000

litres of clean water to
flood affected families



1,517

emergency flood relief
packages distributed
to families in need



65

hospital clinic visits for
our Gecko families

2011 goals achieved

did we do it?

Yes we did! ☺ Reflecting on our goals for the past year is an important part of monitoring and evaluation at Green Gecko, to make sure we are heading in the right direction and achieving what we set out to do. Here is our checklist of major goals (from last year's annual report) along with an update on where we are at with them and what we have achieved so far...



Vocational centre for women - 100% achieved

We joined forces with our friends at Grace House to open Grace Gecko Vocational Centre for Women - a space where women can learn new weaving skills, enabling them to provide for their families safely and with dignity.



New resources for fundraisers - 100% achieved

Our website and YouTube channel now feature four brand new films by the Geckos, designed to give kids around the world an insight into Cambodian culture. Head to greengeckoproject.org and click on Kids Helping Kids to take a look at the films, teachers' resources and more!



Art exhibition in Singapore - 100% achieved

The Mary Black Fundraiser and Art Auction wowed Singapore in March... not to mention one overwhelmed Gecko mum! Thanks to our friends at Hotel de la Paix and the Embassy of Ireland in Singapore for making it happen.



Seek international accounting advice and auditing assessment - 100% achieved

We welcomed accounting volunteer Sarah Owen through the Accounting for International Development program in May. Sarah has worked closely with our centre manager and accountant Eng Neang and the team to improve our Quickbooks accounting systems and reporting.



and other milestones

Gecko kids help 1,517 Cambodian families through their Flood Relief Tourism Collaboration

Throughout September and October, Cambodia experienced some of the worst flooding in living memory. While the flood waters lapped at our sand-bagged bedrooms, classrooms and office, we at Green Gecko knew we were the lucky ones. Good building design and hundreds of truckloads of landfill had paid off, but many across the country were faring much, much worse. The Gecko kids got working on their proposal...

“Many people need urgent help. Our Gecko daddy Rem has seen two areas that are very desperate. One is local - on the way to the Tonle Sap Lake. The other area most badly affected is Kompong Thom.

“We would like to invite you, your staff and your friends and guests to join us to help Cambodian flood victims.”

When Siem Reap's tourism industry heard of the kids' proposal to help their fellow Cambodians, they were spurred into action. Together with community partners - Hotel de la Paix, Golden Banana Boutique Hotel & Resort, Heritage Suites Hotel and Exotissimo Travel - and hundreds of generous hearts from around the world, we shared one common goal - to deliver emergency food packages to Cambodian families in desperate need.

In scorching sun and torrential rain, our shared goal of delivering much-needed food and water was accomplished... through lots of sweat, hard work, laughter and the incredible energy of everyone involved.

Going way beyond our original goals, we were able to deliver 22,000 kilos of rice, 8,000 litres of clean water and 6,302 cans of fish to fifteen badly-affected villages in what was the worst flooding in Cambodia's living memory.



proud moments



Bokator stars join Giant Puppet Parade

Our bokator stars joined in the fun at Siem Reap's annual Giant Puppet Parade celebrations in February, performing at the parade finale in the park. Congratulations to our friends at Giant Puppet Project friends on another fantastic year of bringing fun and creativity to the kids of Siem Reap!



Dengue Fever hits Siem Reap

The band, that is! Dengue Fever got the crowds rocking at the Arts Loung of Hotel de la Paix—our long time community partners— with all proceeds from the concert supporting Green Gecko as well as Cambodian Living Arts.



Five lucky Gecko kids (and one excited Gecko mum!) also got to experience their incredible talent and meet the band members—Ethan, Zac, Senon, Paul, David and Khmer songstress Chhom Nimol—during a private sound check before the show. Not only did the band get hands clapping and feet tapping to the beat, they also kindly gave permission for the Geckos to use Dengue Fever music in the soundtrack of our Gecko short films.



Our first Gecko graduate!

July marked a historic day in Gecko history when one of our oldest sons, Davvy, graduated from Siem Reap's highly respected Paul Dubrulle Hotel and Tourism School. The atmosphere and smiling faces of Cambodia's future said it all as hundreds of students waited anxiously for their names to be announced on graduation day.

Receiving their certificates and graduation gifts, it was hard for the eyes not to well with pride, not only for our own Gecko son but for each and every one of these young adults, who against many odds have worked so hard to make their dreams come true. We congratulate you all!



...and fun times

Gecko art for Cambodian wildlife conservation

Our proud Gecko artists took part in Hotel de la Paix's end-of-year exhibition, 'Endangered', exploring some of the issues facing wildlife conservation in Cambodia.

All the Geckos spent months learning about the importance of wildlife conservation. Thanks to the Sam Veasna Centre for Wildlife Conservation, they also enjoyed a field trip to see and experience the natural habitat of some of Cambodia's most endangered species, before creating their own unique individual and group artworks with the support of Cambodian artist - and Gecko's resident art teacher - Savann Oun.

Our grooving girls win first place!

Another end of year highlight for the Geckos is their annual concert at New York International School.

Weeks are spent rehearsing song lyrics and dance moves for the annual talent quest... and Pichet, Nott, Kunthea, Srey Lai and Kim Suan took out first place for the dance competition. Go girls!

Khmer New Year at Green Gecko

Cambodia ushered in the New Year in March with music, fun and games in every village across the country... and Green Gecko was no exception! Many of the kids spent the week at home with their families, enjoying some quality time together.

For some though, Green Gecko is their only home, so we celebrated as a family and enjoyed a bunch of fun activities including swimming, dancing, traditional games and crafts, and visiting the pagoda.



more proud moments!



Our bokator masters receive their blue kramas

“VERY IMPRESSED, FANTASTIC, AMAZING!”... a delighted Grand Master San Kim Sean sang the praises of 52 Gecko kids as they proudly received their blue krama certificates for bokator.

This traditional Cambodian scarf represents their grade like a belt does in other martial arts. The blue krama is the third in line of grading after white and green, and bestows the honour of allowing students to pass on their knowledge to others and become bokator teachers.

We believe this ancient - and almost forgotten - traditional martial art of Cambodia was perhaps the best and most powerful initiative we have ever introduced at Gecko. Bokator's principles of self-discipline, respect, breathing, meditation, natural medicine and spirit power have not only taught the kids how to protect themselves and given them an appreciation of their proud Khmer culture and history, but it also - and more significantly - greatly contributed to further building their resilience, confidence and self-esteem to a level we could only dream of before.

There are few Khmer children learning this incredible art, and it is our dream - and that of our kids - that we may one day open a child-safe bokator school. We hope that our Gecko kids can reach out to the wider community and pass their skills and knowledge onto other children, so they can grow into strong and proud Khmers too.



Only girls in Cambodia to attain the Blue Krama

Grand Master San Kim Sean's greatest joy was to see so many girls learning bokator. Here he is, pictured with our youngest blue krama girls. These Green Gecko girls are not only our youngest girls to reach this level, they are the ONLY girls in Cambodia to be awarded the blue krama. Well done girls!



Geckos make the Channel Ten news

Our development coordinator Clem spoke about Green Gecko's work on Australian television in March, as part of a Channel Ten special report on Australians helping to rebuild Cambodia. As well as Green Gecko, many of our Siem Reap friends also featured, talking about the great work they are doing here.

Green Gecko band

The Green Gecko band started up this year, and soon had everyone up dancing and rocking at our sixth birthday party in July!

Following an interest expressed by some of our teenagers, we added a music class to our creative program on Fridays and soon found some of the Geckos had a natural talent for music. They were so keen to learn more they sourced their own Khmer music teacher and continue to learn how to read music and play instruments.

Province awards

One way in which we instil responsibility in our Geckos is by dividing Green Gecko into provinces.

Each of our seven groups - Singing Snakes, Cool Crocodiles, Mighty Monkeys, Fabulous Frogs, Buzzing Bees, Energetic Elephants and Terrific Tigers - are responsible for a section of Green Gecko, also known as their province. It's their job to keep their province clean, tidy and safe for their constituents.

At the end of each two month term, the group with the best team work and best looking province is rewarded with a group dinner/meeting at Gecko's favourite restaurant—Green Star! Where they discuss the strengths and hardships of being leaders and working in teams. .



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.

Activities classes are based around themes, which **create connections** between the skills, experience and knowledge of our Khmer teaching staff, our western volunteers and the children.

Some of our Gecko activities classes include Library, Computers, Me and My Planet, Expressive Arts, Khmer Literacy, Khmer Media, Logic, Movie Club and Communications.

'Me and My Planet' themes in 2011 included:



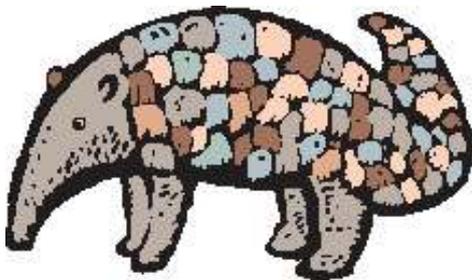
Storytelling



Famous historical people



Religions around the world



Endangered animals of Cambodia



Geography

investing in our crew

empowering our staff through capacity building

14

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

7

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

2011 saw our biggest investment yet in training and development for our Khmer staff.

1. KAROL+SETHA, Maryknoll (3 staff members)

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

2. Working with Vulnerable Children, Social Services of Cambodia (6 staff members)

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

3. Management training, Possibilities World (1 staff member)

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

4. Boys' Forum, First Step (4 staff members)

Sharing ideas and strategies on supporting male survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation.

5. Basic Awareness of Trafficking in Cambodia, Chab Dai Coalition (4 staff members)

Focusing on care of survivors and on prevention, so children can be safe and know their rights.



gecko financials

income

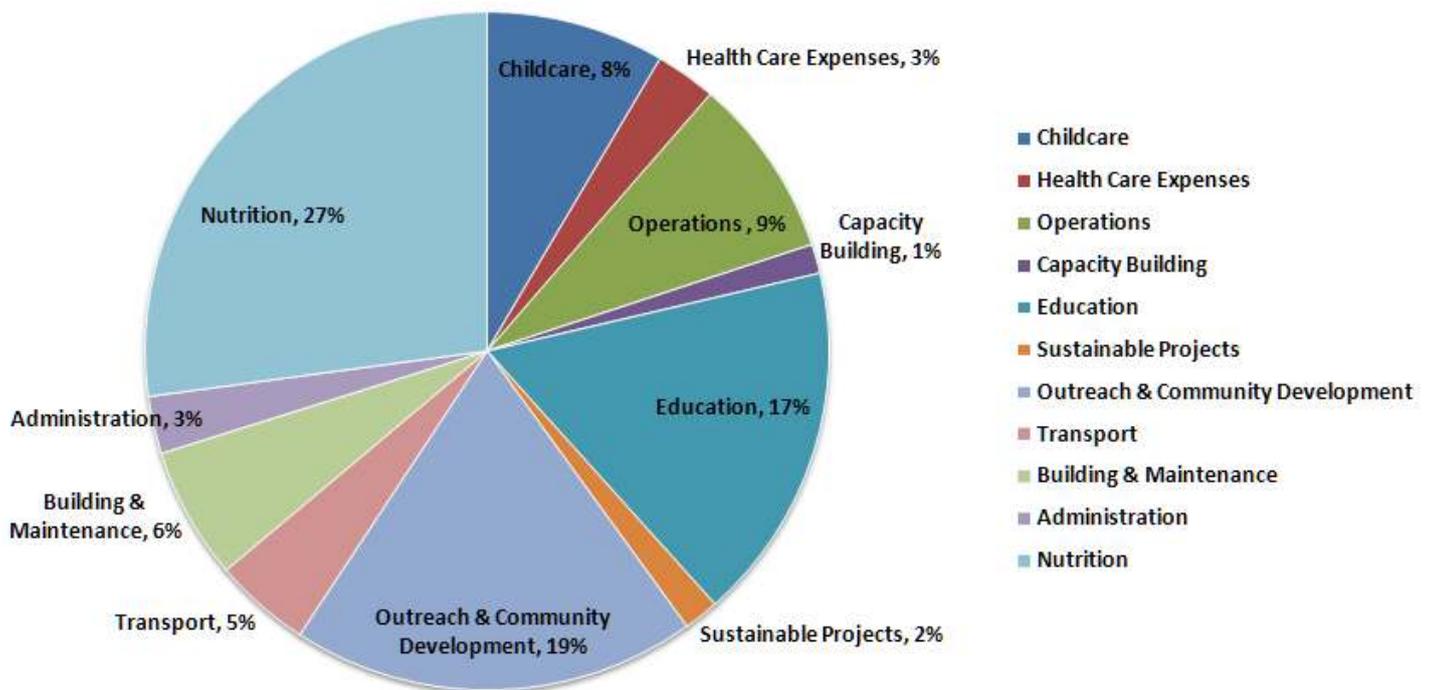
Donations	126,156.46
Sponsorship	111,500.00
Visitor donations	10,898.20
Gift shop Income	19,943.00
Grants	21,810.70
Flood relief	29,898.00
TOTAL INCOME	320,206.36

100%

of general donations went directly to Gecko programs.

0%

of general donations went to western salaries



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.

where it goes

NUTRITION (fresh organic food daily, rice, fruit, purified water for children and crew, and 3 kitchen staff who are actual Gecko mums)	80,318.13
EDUCATION (Khmer school, university, vocational training, performance and art, bokator (martial arts), traditional music, modern music, Khmer history, English literacy, Khmer literacy)	50,591.66
CHILDCARE (house parents, uncle and aunties, children's clothing, shoes and accessories, hygiene products, recreational activities, kids budgeting allowance, identity cards, blankets, mosquito nets and everyday essentials)	24,983.10
OPERATIONS (staff, rent, communications, furniture fittings and equipment, garbage, computer equipment, electricity... all the boring things)	25,405.22
OUTREACH / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (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)	56,680.98
SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS (chicken farm, fish farm, visitors hut, fundraising costs and gift shop)	4,942.05
HEALTH (hospital/clinic expenses and medicines, care worker for kids, staff and families)	8,531.72
BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE (new buildings, pathways, reroofing, painting, fencing, shade areas and maintenance staff and materials)	18,635.29
CAPACITY BUILDING (staff training: working with vulnerable children, sexual health and relationship education, management courses, driving school)	4,128.10
ADMIN (Khmer centre manager, accountant, bank fees, government charges, stationery and printing)	8,115.81
TRANSPORT (school bus, petrol, servicing, bicycles, flat tyres, tuk tuk's)	13,575.76
TOTAL RUNNING COSTS (\$USD)	295,907.82

The grand total expenditure for 2011 was \$295,907 and includes \$25,519 in emergency flood relief costs. 100% of this expenditure was funded through donations specifically for this relief effort through our Flood Relief Tourism Collaboration with tourism operators in Siem Reap and friends around the globe... thank you!

gecko classics...

When asking a group of 11-13 year olds “What is the best thing about being a Gecko kid?”, one would be forgiven for expecting them to say... playing football, roller-blading, getting new clothes or playing computer. Instead they answered:

1. Feeling safe and protected
2. Being healthy and having enough food to eat
3. Receiving the opportunity for education
4. Feeling confident to speak up, knowing that our opinion matters



“Mum, what does “sassy” mean?” “I guess it sort of means being cool and clever at the same time...”
“Oh, so that means you must be a sassy mum!” 😊

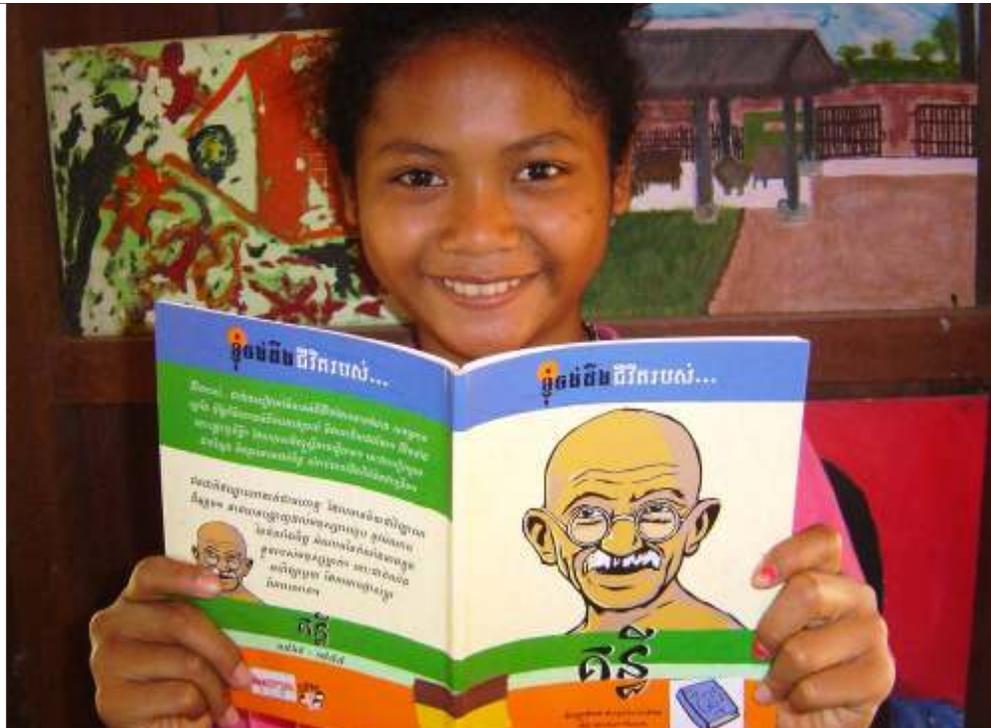
Talking about good and bad things that come with modern technology such as mobile phones and Computers:

“The bad thing about computers is that people are on Facebook and they say that they love you and then you get married **BEFORE UNIVERSITY.**”
Tahn (13)

Many others from the Class backed that statement. :-)

In Living Values this week speaking of relationships - when two people have a special connection between each other that you can't explain...

"So Mum, is it something like Bluetooth?"



Me & My Planet subject of the week is the evolution theory. When our new volunteer Ali was introduced at assembly, Grey Nar asked "Are you a Homo Sapien?"

In Living Values, the subject was CHILD RIGHTS. Rem asked the class "What is the most important right of a child?"... Sarm (7) put up his hand and said... "LOVE!"

gecko gratitude

The sky's the limit!

From Sydney to Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, Dubai and Las Vegas, we were overwhelmed by the support from our international group of skydivers in April this year. Over 60 supporters were crazy and brave enough to take the plunge and jump at six sites around the world, raising over \$50,700 for the Geckos in an amazing show of spirit and support.



Perhaps the biggest inspiration for the young-at-heart on the day was 84-year-old Audrey Mutton. Audrey joined the Melbourne crew to offer her support on the ground... or so she thought!

After buying a raffle ticket on the bus there—thinking she might win a nice bottle of wine, she told us later—Audrey soon found she was, in fact, the lucky winner of a free skydive. Next thing she knew, she was on the plane and enjoying her very first exhilarating jump with the group.

Awkoon tom tom (**thank you big big!**) to all of our skydivers, fundraisers, supporters and friends... you really have proved that **the sky is the limit!**

11.11.11 Global Gecko Giving Day

Another fabulous idea from the brains behind the Gecko skydives, Tori Higgins, the Global Gecko Giving Day connected **Gecko friends around the world** through green-themed celebrations.

From morning teas and kids' snacks to dinner parties and pub crawls, there were group outings to famous landmarks, and even a walk with the fairy penguins. One thing's for sure - our Gecko friends are definitely creative, and we think the photos **speak for themselves!**

To all of our Gecko friends...

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!

To 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... to 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).

11.11.11 global geckos!



recognition & support

Proud to be a certified Child Wise Child Safe Organisation™

Protecting the children of Cambodia is our number one priority at Green Gecko, and taking active steps to keep our children safe has been part and parcel of our work since our early beginnings.

In June this year, international child protection agency Child Wise conducted a detailed audit on our child protection policies and procedures. We are proud to announce that we passed with flying colours, and are now certified as a Child Wise Child Safe Organisation™.

In their report, Child Wise states that we clearly articulate our child protection procedures and commitment to child safety, and that the measures we have put in place reduce the risks of abuse within Green Gecko. They were particularly impressed with our commitment to child participation in decision-making, and consider child empowerment as "one of the most important factors in strengthening child safety in an organisation".

In their own words:

“Green Gecko should be commended on its commitment to child protection and child safety in all its activities and its policies. Both management and staff members have a comprehensive understanding of child abuse and the measures in place to protect children from violation of their rights. In particular, Child Wise was impressed by Green Gecko's commitment to ensuring children participate in all issues that directly affect them. This commitment has allowed children to have their views respected and are empowered to make positive decisions.”

Congratulations to our Gecko kids and crew on a well-deserved recognition from Child Wise!



kids helping kids



Our short film superstars hit YouTube

Want to learn more about the lives of the Gecko kids? Our brand new series of short films has been designed for our friends around the globe, giving an insight into Cambodian culture and life in Siem Reap through the Gecko kids' eyes.



Created by the Gecko kids - with a little help from superstar filmmaking volunteer Gem Steller - over a six month period, the short films explore aspects of life in Siem Reap including the markets, the temples, Cambodian arts and a day in the life of Green Gecko.



Teachers, parents and enthusiastic kids can download activity sheets and suggestions for classroom activities from our website, as well a list of websites and additional resources about Cambodian history and culture.

Check out our YouTube channel... and don't forget to share our Gecko films with your friends and let us know what you think!



FACEBOOK | www.facebook.com/greengeckoproject

YOUTUBE | www.youtube.com/user/greengeckoproject



1780

Gecko friends on
our Facebook



1284

friends signed up
for our newsletter



5439

views on YouTube
for Kim Suan's story

our goals for 2012



Social Enterprise No. 2 - vocational training

With our mums now weaving at the Grace Gecko Vocational Centre for Women, we're now researching options for a second vocational training centre for vulnerable young people and adults in Siem Reap. Watch this space!



Increasing our young adults participation in decision making and responsibility

As our Gecko kids grow, it's important to give them opportunities to participate in responsible decision making - skills they will carry forward into their adult lives. 2012 is the year we aim to increase their leadership qualities by playing more responsible roles.



Taking the next step in our family outreach

With our kids taking more responsibility within our Gecko programs, reassessing the role of our house uncles and aunts and exploring holistic ways they can support our families is a top priority.



Family days

We'd love to encourage greater family participation at Gecko by taking advantage of fun opportunities for community education through family days.



Plotting for our future

To secure a sustainable future for the Geckos and future generations, we would like to purchase a block of land for a child-safe community arts space and bokator centre, creating a safe space where children from Gecko, other organisations and the wider community can enjoy and explore music, art and dance.

how you can help

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. 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 Poum and Tania Palmer
and all the Gecko kids, families and staff.

