

CAMBODIA AND THE SI PRESIDENT’S APPEAL – SIX MONTHS ON

- 11TH AUGUST 2022



The first project of the SI President’s Appeal ‘Opening Doors to a Bright Future’ launched in Cambodia in early 2022, in the Soroptimist International Federation of South East Asia Pacific. ‘Education and Learning in Cambodia throughout the life course’, is working in partnership with the Cambodian Community Dream Organization (CCDO).

Six months on, and CCDO has proven to be an exceptional partner, achieving so much together with the women and girls in the community. Training and sharing messages in the village to promote gender equality and women in leadership, CCDO has reported that women and girls have been inspired to join the programme by their neighbours and friends in the village.

The programme set a target of reaching 2,000 women and girls, and as of July 2022, they have already reached **2438** women and girls – truly exceptional!



Photo: Higher Education and Career Training

Achievements

- 79 gender training sessions took place with 1,398 women and girls participating.
- 90 groups – a total of 1,815 women and girls, joined personal development training sessions.
- 505 women and girls participated in business/small medium enterprise training, with many already starting small business ventures at home to generate more income for their families.

The CCDO project team additionally worked with Commune Community Women’s Councils (CCWC), to provide special mentoring and coaching to 285 women and girls in counselling, family planning, goal setting, and health education. Four media campaigns were also launched in and around the villages, to raise awareness and share key messages encouraging women’s leadership and gender equality. Approximately 19,051 people have benefited in numerous ways from this.



Photo: Madam Makara

Madam Makara is 35 years old, and is married to a farmer in the Tropeangrun Village, Prasat Bakong district, Siem Reap, Cambodia. With three children, her family lost all during the COVID-19 pandemic, as her husband Mr. Sok Met was unable to travel to work in the city to earn income. Makara and her family continued to struggle post-pandemic, as she was unable to work in the rice field.

In early February 2022, the CCDO ‘Women and Girl Empowerment Programme’ began recruiting women and girls, and Makara, made the decision to participate in a two-year programme. Along with other women and girls, Makara received training on topics ranging from gender equality and self development, to financial management, business and enterprise skills.



Photo: Discussion Meeting

Makara explained that the programme inspired her, and she has now become a role model to others in the village, never failing to attend her training sessions. The programme has given her the confidence and skills she needs for chicken raising, including how to build a proper shelter for the chickens; how to rear them and then sell them; budgeting and money management, and her project has since achieved great results.

She also encouraged her husband to use some of the funds from selling chickens to start to make rattan baskets, having learnt to do this from another woman in the village. Now, both she and her husband, have more income and are able to keep their family's health and finances in good order.

The CCDO team said: "We are proud of her outputs, and she currently volunteers in our programme to be a model for other women and girls who we call 'SMART WOMEN'. Makara will inspire more women and girls to be just like her".

Makara says, "I have today because of the CCDO project, the funds to support my children in education, and daily family expenses. I am committed to helping other women and girls in my community to have better lives."

CCDO, Madam Makara and her family would like thank to Soroptimist International (SI) for making this project happen in Cambodia, and allowing CCDO to make the dreams of women and girls' come true.

"Thank you to all the members, Clubs, Regions, Unions and Federations that have donated to the SI President's Appeal. You can see how your funds are directly helping women and girls in Cambodia". **SI President, Maureen Maguire.**

Please visit your Federation website to donate to "Opening Doors to a Bright Future".