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... il y a peu d'endroits au monde où l'on assiste aussi brillamment à la transformation de petits chiffonniers en écoliers ... pour une vie meilleure et féconde ...  
(M. James Morris, Directeur Mondial du Programme Alimentaire de l'Onu, après son passage à PSE).



## The 22<sup>nd</sup> tour ...

Ghislaine Dufour, President

From 2<sup>nd</sup> March to 16<sup>th</sup> May, Marie-France will once again be on the roads of France, crossing borders here and there. 37 evening events in just over two months, to provide news from the children in Phnom Penh and in the communities of Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, 37 evenings to attract new sponsors and new benefactors to join the PSE family. Thank you to the 37 teams who have offered to take the risk of filling a venue; amongst whom many are "new". They count on all of you who receive this newsletter to pass on the dates of the tour to all your friends who are on its route...

At the start of this year, FLIP (Family Livelihood Improvement Program) opens up to youngsters who have dropped out. For seven years, FLIP has been offering a six-month training course to parents in great difficulty, helping them develop a small business thanks to microcredit. At PSE, we commit ourselves to lead each child to a job. The education teams endeavour to tailor the development of each child and to accompany them in an individual way. If they drop out, we have to try other things!

We need your help for this. For some of you, think about PSE at the time of ISF/IFI (property tax) for example.

Thank you for your loyalty.

## Let's talk about the tour



seeing you again very soon. ([Programme on pages 3 and 4](#))

Yes, on 24<sup>th</sup> February we set out to come and tell you what is going on here in Cambodia and the miracles which, thanks to all of you, PSE accomplishes daily. Sok Sary will accompany me and witness of his experience since violence forced him to leave his family at the age of 11, until today when, as a husband and a father, having been a student in our School of Media, he has become a teacher there. And, like last year, loyal and reliable, my sisters will, in turn, take the steering wheel. It will be a great pleasure

## From destitution ... to a vocation ... it works !

Destitution is not always immediately apparent. In a country that is developing rapidly, it is hidden and can go unnoticed. But it exists, however, for those families who, because of the Khmer rouge regime, didn't receive any education and, without any training, cannot find work. So, they survive in precarious odd jobs but are unable to keep pace with developments. This is why the education of their children is capital. They knew this very well, these children who asked us, 22 years ago, for one meal a day and to be able to go to school. This is how PSE started.



But it is evident that a child will not be able to study calmly if his family is destitute and will not be able to study at all if this family needs him to work in order for them to survive. It is therefore necessary to school the children but, in addition, to give their families the basics so that schooling can happen under good conditions.

We have grouped these families into 4 categories, depending on their level of poverty. "Category 1", the poorest of the poor, are those whose revenue is less than \$1.90 per person per day (Cambodia's poverty threshold, in town). They benefit from all the aid programmes and represent over half our families: 58%.

Next is "category 2", a little less poor, who have between \$1.90 and \$2.61 per person per day, representing a further 38% of our families.

Those in "category 3", 4% of the total, have between \$2.62 and \$3.33. And the "category 4", only 1%, have between \$3.35 and \$4. Families in these two categories, who are on the borderline of our criteria, benefit from schooling and vocational training, vital for all, including for those who are ill suited to school, but they participate financially according to their means and don't benefit from the entirety of our other programmes.

# Know your children

**R and M.** A 19-year-old boy and a girl who has not even turned 2. The mother is on her own. She was a scavenger at night until health problems forced her to quit. Despite her desire to study, the eldest decided to stop his studies so as to earn money and pay off debts. Hard to not step in and do something! ... So, we hired the mother in our social work programme and gave them rice and financial support so that R. could continue his studies. As for the little one, too young for day care, she spends her day with a childminder. What other solution that would allow the young man to complete his education?



**D, S, M, P and V.** The eldest and the 3<sup>rd</sup> are in Level 3 (CE2) in State school, financed by PSE. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is in prison and the last 2 daughters aged 4 and 5, are at home. Where they live is catastrophic: drugs, gang members, poor hygiene ... The father left the family with another woman and does not care for his family. The mother, another one without any training, washes dishes and does not earn enough for the family to live on. 70 cents per person per day is just not enough to live on ... PSE has given them rice and enrolled the two youngest in daycare since they were being left alone at home.



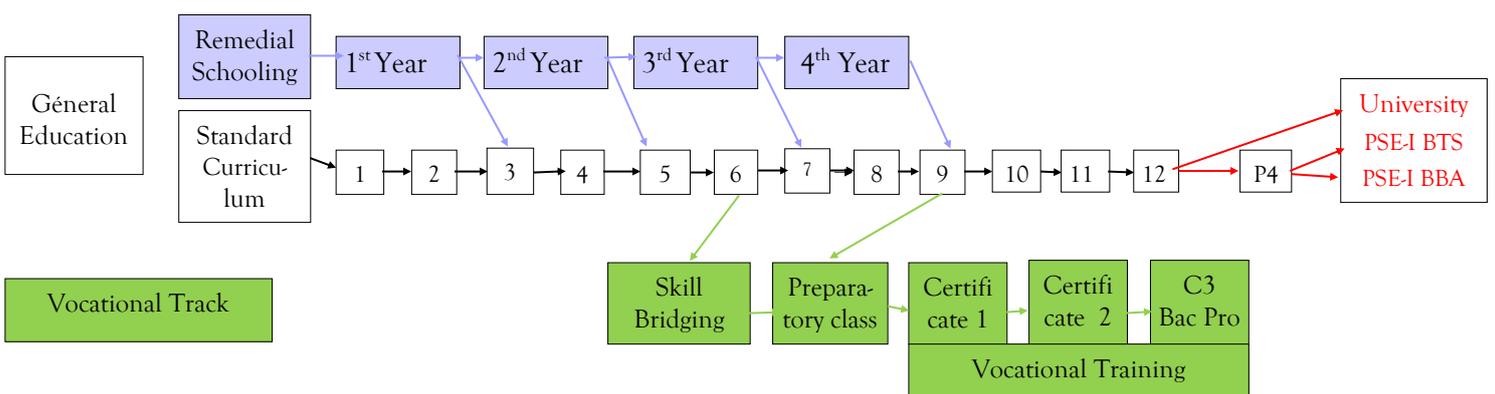
**L, L and R.** 2 boys, aged 7 and 3 and a little 1-year old girl. The father uses drugs and the mother, who scavenges, would like to be able to work because it is clear they don't have enough to live on. So, we provide 2 meals a day for the children, school for the eldest, daycare for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, milk and daily care, at a childminder's house for the little one and, of course, rice. This way, their mother will be able to find a job, but it won't come easily, as she has no skills and, no doubt, she won't be able to earn much and will need to rely on PSE for a while yet because her children are still young and won't be able to help her straight away ... But, she will perhaps decide to follow one of our adult training programmes in order to earn more after developing a skill.

**The "pailletes", 1<sup>st</sup> step towards education.** When no one is there to care for them, children from 3 to 6 years old, depending on their family's means, of course, may benefit from our nursery schools.



In Sihanoukville, we have 2 "pailletes" and 5 in Phnom Penh.

**Then, once they turn 6, schooling begins with several paths to a vocation.**



## And the result: what has become of them?

**SOKNEOU**, many of you know her since she was one of the heroines of the film *Les Pépites* (Little Gems). Today she is a radiant girl, one of our most beautiful gems. I can still see her, at the dump where she spent her days, covered in the vile mud she had fallen in... And to see her today, with her bright smile, is nearly a miracle. After attending school,



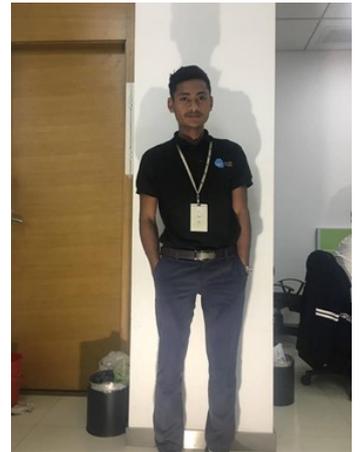
she chose the Chef's training course, with the aim of opening her own restaurant with her sister who was studying Service skill. But Sokneou is also passionate about rugby, in which she excels. So passionate that she has become a coach. She was hired by Kampuchea Balopp, a beautiful partner association, which supports education for disadvantaged youth through rugby training.



So, if you happen to meet her, be kind enough not to ask her about her restaurant because she feels bad to not be working in food production. But to open a restaurant, one must first have some savings! ... Anyway, isn't working towards the education of young people and children in difficulty, a way to give back what she has received from PSE? No, Sokneou, do not feel ashamed. Take advantage of your youth to help those who are as you once were when we first knew you. You'll have plenty of time, later on, to get back to the food produc-

tion. We are proud of you.

**LENOUN** lived in the countryside. One day, because of his family's poverty, he decides to stop school to leave and make money in Phnom Penh. But since he is too young to work, for a year and a half, he becomes a scavenger to survive and help his family a little. Every day, he sees children pass wearing the PSE uniform. He dreams of going to school like them ... With his family's agreement, he contacts the Social Team who come to investigate, visit his shelter, ask him questions and, soon after, he is admitted into our programme. But he has no place to sleep and must continue his job of scavenger in the evenings and weekends. But because he does not earn enough, he is kicked out and has to sleep in the street. After a while, PSE provides him with a stipend. He is happy to be able to devote himself to studying. After remedial schooling and the preparatory class, he chooses to train in plumbing and air conditioning installation. 3 years later, he leaves PSE with the official Certificate 1, equivalent to 11<sup>th</sup> grade level. While working, he continues to study and gets Certificates 2 and 3, then a BTS in electricity. After a 1<sup>st</sup> salary of \$150, he gets an increase to \$200, changes employer to earn \$350 and then \$450 one year later. Today, he is responsible for a team of electricians in one of the largest towers of Phnom Penh and earns \$600 per month. This new salary has enabled him to buy a house, with an additional loan from the bank. He ends his story by saying, "I would like to say thanks to Papy and Mamie. I still keep both of you in my heart forever." These are not just empty words: he volunteers during his holidays, to teach young students and share his experience with them, hoping to contribute to PSE, and motivate the younger generation to become operational. What a beautiful success story!



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## To help the families get ahead

For all those parents who didn't have the chance to study or complete vocational training, our Family Livelihood Improvement Program is offering short-term 6-month-long training sessions because these parents need to make a living to support their families. To be able to finish these programmes, they receive a stipend of \$3.50 per day for the entirety of the programme, of which 0.50 is put into a savings account for them. In the year 2016-2017, out of 79 people who signed up to the programme, 55 found a job, 11 opened a small business, 5 did not finish and 8 did not find work. Considering the underprivileged population we target, a success rate of 87% is pretty encouraging! The current proposed training programmes are cooking, cleaning and sewing. Now, we are planning to extend this programme to teenagers who failed at school and to offer a larger range of courses.

*We are looking for a volunteer construction engineer, near Paris, to help for the conception and follow up of large construction works.*