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KHANA'S MONTHLY BULLETIN

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LAUNCHING PROJECT WITH EU'S NEW GRANT

Playing a key role in the response to HIV/AIDS in Cambodia, KHANA has received new grant from the European Union to extend its work in new target areas. The five-year project starting from January 2007 is implemented in 3 provinces - Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, and Prey Veng.

Dr. Tith Khimuy, KHANA Programme Director, said the grant is very important to help reduce HIV/AIDS in the country. "The EU funds through the UK based International HIV/AIDS Alliance is focusing on three main areas - prevention, care support, and advocacy," he said.

With a budget of half million dollars per year, the project is being implemented by seven NGO partners in the three provinces,.

NGO partners have been selected through an open voting process at provincial consultation meetings. Before starting the implementation in May, selected partners must join a project design workshop in late March. The project will target sex workers, married people, youth, MSM, drug users,

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MONKS JOIN COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT PLHA



Monk San Pon provides advice and encouragement to a group of PLHA living in the pagoda shelter

From a pagoda on the outskirts of Siem Reap provincial town, a group of Buddhist monks regularly travel to the field to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS among villagers, and provide Home-Based Care to People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

Working closely with one of KHANA's NGO partners, Salvation Center Cambodia (SCC), the monks also offer a pagoda-based shelter to PLHA from different provinces and an office for SCC.

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"Our monks travel to communities every week to help educate people on the risk of HIV/AIDS and provide home-based care to some PLHA and OVC," said San Pon, Technical Coordinating Advisor and Monk Team Leader, working with SCC from Athismorsan pagoda. "PLHA and OVC need our help, so we must go to them," he added.

According to SCC Programme Officer Mr. Ung Kimsour, there are approximately 332 PLHA and 892 OVC in three districts under the care of the center in cooperation with the monks. He said his staff, volunteers, and the monks go to referral hospitals and villages three days a week to provide home-based care, encouragement, and some donations of food and clothes.

In the three-room shelter at the pagoda, rotating group of PLHA from different provinces always stay. They live there in the short term until they get ARV from the provincial health centers with the help of the monks and SCC.

"I am so happy that I can get ARV through the monks and SCC, otherwise I think I would already be dead," said Srey Trou, a 41-year-old HIV positive widow whose husband died of AIDS in 2000.

According to San Pon, the shelter for the PLHA seeking help is not big enough but the pagoda has no more room. "Sometimes up to 50 people from different provinces stay at the pagoda while seeking ARV in Siem Reap town, so they need to stay on the floor outside the shelter." However, he added, the monks and SCC try to find alternative shelter for them and have a Trust Fund to collect donations.

Athismorsan pagoda also hosted a training course on HIV/AIDS, STIs and Human Rights on 23-28 December, 2006. Sixty monks, clergies, and nuns from several provinces attended so that they could transfer the knowledge to their communities.



A group of monks, clergies, and nuns attended the first training course on HIV/AIDS, STIs and Human Rights at Athismorsan pagoda.

WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

To join the globe in celebrating women worldwide on the International Women's Day on March 8, KHANA held a friendly gathering to celebrate the important contribution made by KHANA's female staff to achieving common goal in serving communities and improving the lives of people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Speaking at the meeting on March, 7 at KHANA office, Dr. Tith Khimuy, KHANA Programme Director, said men have to keep in mind gender and code of ethic towards their female colleagues in the office. "I know that our gentlemen here

In the friendly atmosphere, men offered flowers to their female colleagues before having solidarity lunch. Ms. Nou Vannary, one of the KHANA Programme officers, expressed her satisfaction with the celebration and especially thanked to her male colleagues for creating an equal and non-discriminatory working environment.

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director General, said women are the backbone of all our societies - as leaders, as caregivers, and as mothers. She, however, said that yet on this day and every



Dr. Tith Khimuy, KHANA Programme Director, gives flowers to an employee at a friendly gathering.

really respect women and I just would like to appeal that such respect must be kept forever. We need gender equality and equity. May the women's day consist forever in our world," he said by adding that women's day is not only on March, 8 but for all days of the whole year.

Ms Heng Satha, one of KHANA's Programme Officers, spoke about the role of women in Cambodia and reminded that, "women must empower ourselves and support each other".

day, too many women in the world lack access to the most basic health care. "Women have particular needs and face specific health issues. However, the health needs of women are given neither the attention nor the prominence they deserve. Each year, for example, more than half a million women die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth alone - a number that has hardly changed in 20 years. In 2006, 74% of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa were young women," she said.

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KHANA also supports four other NGOs to reach drug users in Phnom Penh and Battambang. Over the past year, KHANA reached up to 1,260 drug users, referring some to STI services, VCCT, vocational training services and rehabilitation services. KHANA-supported drop-in centres provided information on risk reduction, medical care, food, and shelter to drug users, including sex workers. KHANA also reached 4,157 vulnerable non-drug users through its drug prevention outreach activities.

KHANA has increased the participation of drug users and injecting drug users in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and advocacy. It has conducted awareness-raising education and advocacy among community and stakeholders and improved the organizational, management and technical capacity and sustainability of KORSANG.



Health kit are provided to drug users along with educational materials supplied by KHANA funding

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and factory workers. "This is a very good opportunity for us to extend our work into the underserved areas where nobody has yet reached," Dr. Khimuy said.

This is the second funding grant from EU. The first grant, through UNFPA, focussed on the field of reproductive health with young people in the provinces of Kandal, Prey Veng, and Kampong Chhnang between 2003 and 2005.



KHANA's team leaders and programme officers on March 19 discussed strategic plan to implement EU's five-year project.

MSM: I WANT TO CHANGE MSM'S BELIEF THAT "WHEN WE BRING CONDOMS WITH US, WE WILL GET BAD LUCK"



Sakuon with buffaloes near his home. Before having a blood test, he sold six buffaloes to buy unknown medicine to treat his sickness

After selling sex for more than a decade, Run Sakuon became infected with HIV. Sakuon lives in Siem Reap town where tourism is booming. "I sold sex to survive and I sometimes had sex with five men a day with both Khmer and foreigners," he said.

In 2002, Sakuon started feeling unwell but he did not know what kind of illness he had. "I sold my six buffaloes to treat myself but my sickness could not be cured. Then, one of my friends took me to have blood test and I found that I was HIV positive," he said.

Due to embarrassment, and fear of stigma and discrimination, Sakuon left his home in Thnol village in Siem Reap to live in another province. However, he returned home a year later after his elderly widow mother persuaded him to.

"I feel normal now because the villagers do not discriminate me and I become a peer outreach worker for a local NGO named Men's Health Cambodia," he said. Men's Health Cambodia is one of KHANA's partners based in Siem Reap town.

Before having his blood test, Sakuon never used condoms when he had sex. "MSM feel that when they bring condoms with them, they will be unlucky and unable to find any customer or a partner to have sex. So, they never have condoms and they never use them during sex," he said. "I want to change this dangerous belief among MSM, otherwise they will get into trouble, like me," he added.

According to unofficial estimation, there are some 7,000 MSM in Cambodia and the number could be higher. KHANA has reached 4,815 MSM in Sihanoukville, Siem Reap, and Battambang provinces with focused prevention efforts since 2002. According to recent Behavioral Surveillance Survey (BSS) results, national average prevalence among MSM is about 5.1% but HIV rates in urban areas are much higher and about 8.6% of MSM has an STI. The survey also shows that there are very low rates of condom use among MSM.

Becoming a peer educator with Men's Health Cambodia in Siem Reap, Sakuon urges all MSM to be careful with the risk of HIV/AIDS epidemic. "I would like to appeal to all MSM to use condoms, so that they cannot infect others with HIV and nobody can transfer it to them.

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME HELPS THOSE IN GREATEST NEED

Yan Saopown, a 35 year old mother of two, was too weak to tend to her crops. In desperation she sold parts of her field in Kompong Lear district, Prey Veng province, as well as pieces of jewelry, in order to buy food for her family. "For ten days out of every month we had no food," she says. On these occasions, Saopown was forced from her sickbed to harvest rice so that her family might eat. When even these short periods of labor became too much, Saopown finally followed the advice of KHANA's NGO partner, Cambodian Children Against Starvation and Violence Association (CCASVA), and visited the VCCT clinic in the provincial town.

"When I got the results and found that I was HIV positive I went into shock", she says. "I was afraid and had an overwhelming feeling of hopelessness. Who was going to look after my daughters? Then, CCASVA told me to confront my sickness- that there were other women living with HIV/AIDS - and that they were able to look after their families and live healthily". With further counseling from CCASVA, an organization that promotes social help, anti- child trafficking and home based care in target areas across Phnom Penh and Prey Veng Province, Saopown began ART and signed up for World Food Program support.

Each month, Saopown collects 30 kilograms of rice, one kilogram of oil

and half a kilogram of salt from her local pagoda. "Now that we receive WFP supplies, we eat more regularly and I feel much less worried", she says. The family eats fish nearly every day and Saopown, having dropped to a weight of 36 kilograms, has since gained 14 kilograms. CCASVA representatives continue to visit her regularly, offering advice as to what to eat as well as encouragement and support.

Saopown's nausea, skin lesions and headaches that accompanied her first month on ART have subsided. Saopown continues to take ART regularly and attends self help group meetings that teach her how to care for herself and her daughters. She is now well enough to manage an assisted income generation activity and is currently raising her second litter of pigs, after successfully selling her first.

KHANA has had an agreement with WFP since October 2003, to provide food rations to PLHA and OVC through KHANA partner NGOs. The agreement aims at providing a stable food intake for PLHA and OVC households so that they can avoid harmful coping mechanisms such as selling land or belongings to pay for food and medicines. The WFP in 2006 provided 2,816.689 tons of rice and since the agreement, 4,703 PLHA families and 4,292 OVC families nationwide have received food support.



From left to right: Miss Bou Sreyna, former KHANA volunteer, and Ms. Yan Saopown with her family member.

FOCUSING PREVENTION WITH KORSANG



KORSANG staff reach drug users in their communities.

Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, is a vibrant, diverse and rapidly growing city. Its population now numbers more than one million. Drug use in Phnom Penh is usually characterized by yama. However, there is also a noticeable increase in heroin use which makes users especially susceptible to HIV transmission because needles are repeatedly used, and shared. KHANA recognized that the services available in Phnom Penh for drug users, especially injecting drug users, were almost non-existent. Such a wide gap between the severity of the issue and the lack of health service provision and responsibility was noted by KHANA and it was decided that this gap should be addressed as part of KHANA's Focused Prevention work.

KHANA works with a Phnom Penh based NGO known as KORSANG. KORSANG is an innovative, compassionate and dedicated organization reaching out to drug users, particularly injecting drug users with risk reduction services.

With support from KHANA, KORSANG has provided behavior change education, and referral to health services from some 1,000 drug users, including 150 injecting drug users. It performs outreach work twice a day, five days a week and reaches over 18 known drug hot spots. KORSANG has been able to train five former drug users as peer educators.

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