

PURPLE BRICS

ISSUE 12 - AUGUST 2007
KHANA'S MONTHLY BULLETIN

www.khana.org.kh



ASIA & EASTERN EUROPE REGIONS CELEBRATE "BLUE SKY WEEK"

This August, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (the Alliance) organised the annual "Blue Sky Week" in Cambodia. The five-day meeting, hosted by KHANA, was held from the 6-10 August for delegates from the Alliance who work in Asia and Eastern Europe. The annual Blue Sky Week is a strategic and creative thinking week - an opportunity for everyone at the Alliance to get together and share ideas, news and feedback on the Alliance's strategy and future.

In this years gathering, the aim was to continue and strengthen the network and seek input on some key concepts relating to the Global Strategic Framework for 2010. During the meeting, delegates discussed global and regional strategic planning, cross-cutting issues, policy and advocacy, sharing best practice and strengthening partnerships between members. They also focused on the common challenges and concerns among the Alliance's country members so that they can find an effective long term strategy to positively respond to HIV/AIDS together.

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FIRST-DECADE OF COMMITMENT IN RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS IN CAMBODIA 10TH-YEAR OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INTERNATIONAL HIV/AIDS ALLIANCE



Dr. Oum Sopheap (right), KHANA Executive Director, gives a welcome remark to the delegates at the 10th-year anniversary. From left to right in the front: H.E. Dr. Teng Kunthy, H.E. Lt. Gen. Lour Ramin, H.E. Dr. Mam Bun Heng, Tony Lisle, H.E. Dr. Mean Chi Vunn, and Jonathan Ross. Ms. Jane Waterman is at the back.

The 8th August, 2007 marked the tenth anniversary of the Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance's (KHANA) partnership with the UK-based International HIV/AIDS Alliance (the Alliance). The year 2007 is a significant year for KHANA and its continued cooperation with national and international GOs, NGOs, stakeholders and our donors.

To celebrate ten years of partnership KHANA organised a special event at its office in Phnom Penh. In his welcoming remarks at the event, Tony Lisle, UNAIDS Country Coordinator and Chair of KHANA's Board of Directors said "KHANA has never been stronger. During its first decade it has become a confident contributor to the HIV/AIDS response in the country and enjoys the respect of the donor community, the government, and fellow non-governmental organizations. "KHANA is now a flourishing, independent and influential organization. Its partners and activities stretch across Cambodia and it represents its constituents at provincial forums, at national policy level and at international events," he said.

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Tony Lisle, UNAIDS Country Coordinator and Chairman of the Board of KHANA, gives his welcoming speech at KHANA's 10-year anniversary.

Echoing Tony Lisle, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Health and Chair of the Cambodian Coordinating Committee for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, His Excellency Dr. Mam Bun Heng, said "KHANA has become a leader in the NGO response to the epidemic over the last decade and everyone working in the field of HIV/AIDS has benefited from its lessons learned, its experiences, its research and its best practice." "KHANA's activities at community level have helped strengthen civil society in Cambodia, have informed many policies, strategies and national funding proposals and, its widespread network of partners and community-based organizations has permitted many national strategies to be implemented across the country," he added.

The celebration marked not just KHANA's achievements and expansion since it was founded in 1996 but also the special 10-year partnership with the Alliance. "The Alliance's relationship with KHANA has had to change and evolve significantly over this period -- from being very heavily involved in direct implementation in the early years and providing intensive financial and technical support, to gradually stepping back and watching KHANA play a lead role in terms of

a national organisation's response to the epidemic, while still continuing to offer technical support as required," said Jane Waterman, Director of Communications and Resource Mobilisation at the Alliance. "The Alliance recognises KHANA as one of its strongest linking organisations and KHANA's programmes, structures and practices have contributed to the development of Alliance supported programmes globally," she said. "The Alliance's desire is to see KHANA implement its recently developed Strategic Plan 2008-2010 and to achieve the objectives outlined in terms of significantly contributing to Cambodia's UA targets, MDGs and the Cambodian Government's National Strategic Plan for Comprehensive and Multisectoral responses to HIV/AIDS and the Alliance will continue to support KHANA to deliver on this Plan," she added. UA is Universal Access and MDGs is Millennium Development Goals.

Speaking at the ceremony, Jonathan Ross, Deputy Director for the Office of Public Health and Education of USAID, said USAID has seen KHANA's programs and partners expand and adapt, and in so doing, effectively tackle the issues that USAID sees at the heart of the epidemic. "It is reassuring to work with an organization

such as KHANA, who have the experience, the flexibility and the support to be able to do this. Thank you, KHANA for your invaluable and unique contribution to the national response, and to the Alliance, for helping making KHANA what it is today," he said.

Dr. Oum Sopheap, KHANA's Executive Director, said "KHANA's growth would have been impossible without the consistent support of the government, KHANA's Board Members, its staff, partners, donors such as the Alliance and USAID....and men, women and children who have inspired KHANA's work with their bravery, their determination and their strength."

The ceremony was also attended by H.E Dr. Teng Kunthy, Secretary General of the National AIDS Authority Cambodia, H.E. Lt. Gen. Lour Ramin, Secretary General of the National Authority for Combating Drugs at the Interior Ministry, H.E Mean Chivunn, Director of the National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs and Advisor to the Ministry of Health, KHANA staff volunteers, consultants, and partners, delegates from the Alliance Secretariat and regional members from Bangladesh, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Ukraine, including both local and international stakeholders.



KHANA releases a big balloon at the anniversary to wish for 65,000 Cambodian PLHA to live in dignity and hope.



Guests enjoy KHANA photo exhibition at the anniversary.



Uy Chanthon (right), KHANA Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, and Hean Sam Ath (far left), KHANA Human Resources Coordinator, welcome foreign guests during their visit.



Jane Waterman (right), Director of the UK-based Alliance's Communications and Resource Mobilisation, speaks at the ceremony of KHANA's 10th-year of partnership with the Alliance.



Ms. B. Altantsetseg (right) -- Executive Director of Mongolia's National AIDS Foundation, one of the Alliance partners in the region -- offers a souvenir to Dr. Oum Sopheap, KHANA Executive Director, at the anniversary.

WFP INVITES NGO PARTNERS TO DISCUSS HIV AND FOOD SUPPORT

The World Food Program organized a workshop to discuss strategies for what NGO partners should do and what they need when there is a possible cut in food supply from donors to their beneficiaries -- People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). NGOs receiving food support for their respective beneficiaries in different provinces participated at "The UN World Food Programme Orientation Workshop on HIV and Food/Nutrition Support".

The workshop was held on July 25 in Siem Reap and it aimed to bring responsible NGOs together to review the relation between HIV and food support so that they can understand the link between food insecurity, nutrition and HIV. "During the one-day workshop, we want the participants to share their experience and operational strategies with each other and to identify the real need for food," said Simon Sadler, Technical Advisor for HIV/Nutrition. As food

from donors and other resources is limited, NGOs must prioritise beneficiaries and the most vulnerable groups who really need food support, said another official at the meeting.

During a brainstorming session at the group discussion, NGO participants understood the possibility of a cut in food supply resources but they also highlighted several requirements to phase out a complete cut. "We really understand that donors cannot help us forever. So we have to be ready for the challenge and the donors must inform us in advance at least between three to six months," said Buddhist Monk San Pon, Technical Coordinating Advisor and Monk Team Leader, working for KHANA's NGO partner the Salvation Center Cambodia (SCC) in Siem Reap. The monk said SCC is trying to explain to 211 PLHA and OVC families who get food supplies -- 30 kg of rice, one kg of oil and half a kg of salt each -- from donors through KHANA to be ready for the



Mr. Am Vicheit, KHANA's Team Leader in the Planning and Reporting of Strategic Information Department, presents his group's work on special needs when donors' food supplies are cut to PLHA and OVC.

cut. "We must be ready and we must try our best to support their lives in a different way," the monk added.

KHANA has had an agreement with WFP since October 2003 to provide food rations through its NGO partners. The agreement aims at providing stable food intake for PLHA and OVC households so that they can avoid harmful coping mechanisms.

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Alliance country members from Thailand, India and Myanmar visit PLHA and OVC working and living at a tile factory in Kandal province.

As the host country member, Dr. Oum Sopheap, KHANA's Executive Director, said in his remark that the meeting was held at the right time for Cambodia to share its experience and activities with Alliance's country members. "It is a good opportunity for us to share our success, lessons learnt, experiences, and best practice with the participants in the region," he said. "Cambodia has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the region but we are now happy that the figures are down from 1.2 percent in 2003 to 0.9 percent in 2006. We will continue our effort further to bring the number down, but in doing this, we have to expand and sustain

our interventions in the field," he added. He said though the result is very encouraging for the nation, there are more challenges ahead to be dealt with, such as the changing face of the epidemic, reaching out to drug users, men who have sex with men, sex workers and their clients, and providing care and support to the increasing number of infected and affected adults and children.

Forty-one key representatives of Country Offices and Linking Organisations from Bangladesh, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand,

and Ukraine, as well as the UK-based Alliance's Secretariat attended "Blue Sky Week". Each country's representative shared their own country's experience and participated in brainstorming to find ways to solve common problems and reach common goals.

The delegates also had an opportunity to see first hand KHANA's NGO partners work in the field. 10 groups visited different NGO partners working in Home Based Care, prevention (Drug and HIV Related Programme), Integrated Care and Prevention, and Drug Related HIV/AIDS Prevention Education.



Jane Waterman (left), the Alliance's Director of Communication and Resource Mobilisation, presents the strategic plan for 2010 to the regional participants at the Blue Sky Week.



NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR MSM



Dr. Nou Vannary (standing centre), KHANA's Team Leader in the Programme Management Department, makes suggestions in a group discussion at the workshop.

With leadership from the National AIDS Authority (NAA), KHANA in cooperation with other stakeholders co-organised a workshop in August to hear ideas and concepts from both local and international experts to create a national strategy targeted at men who have sex with men (MSM). The two-day meeting on National

Strategic Framework for MSM was held on 9th and 10th August in Phnom Penh.

This was the first time that both local and international GOs and NGOs officially discussed a national strategic framework for this target group. The framework aims to scale up public awareness of health issues, especially on HIV/AIDS, among MSM.

During the meeting, small group discussions were held which focused on issues regarding objectives and challenges for MSM. Three outcomes of the workshop were reached: agreement on the current situation and what needs to be done for a better response, agreement on an outline of the National Strategic Framework and what to achieve, and development of the first draft of an operational/work plan to meet the needs of MSM.

Horn Bunvarak, Programme Manager of the National MSM Network (Bandanh Chatomuk), which is one of KHANA's 63 NGO partners, said

the workshop is really crucial for his network and all MSM nationwide. "MSM across the country will really get benefit from the workshop because it provides national guidelines and strategy to improve quality of life and reduce discrimination on MSM," he said. Through the national strategic framework discussed in the meeting, he said, discrimination of MSM at workplaces, communities and even in families will be reduced and MSM will be offered more open opportunities in society such as access to services and better health care.

The workshop drafted a framework which will be finalized by a technical working group consisting of representatives from Ministry of National Defence; the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation; the Ministry of Cults and Religion; the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; the NAA; The National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs; UNAIDS; UNESCO; KHANA; FHI; CARE; PSI; Marie Stopes; PSF, BBC, Pact Cambodia; RHAC and a freelance consultant. After finalization by the group, there will be a final presentation at another workshop before they become official guidelines for implementation.

KHANA'S STAFF CORNER

KHANA welcomes two new staff members.

Glynnis Brooks

Started work: 30th July, 2007

Position: Technical Support Officer and Acting Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Resource Mobilisation Department.

Glynnis prior to KHANA, was based in Cambodia as a Project Manager and Technical Management Advisor in integrated health programming for several years. She comes to KHANA with an extensive experience in HIV combined with a background in Development and Public Health from a variety of cultural settings in both an Africa and Asia context. "I am looking forward to working in a truly Cambodian NGO and contributing my skills to strengthening the new PARM Directorate as it prepares for a new decade in support of policy positions, advocacy and resource mobilisation, to ensure KHANA goes from strength to strength responding in the light of a rapidly evolving epidemic and the needs that it has identified."



Sron Samrithea

Started work: 20 August 2007

Position: Senior Compliance Officer in the Financial and Administration Department.

Samrithea has experience in financial and grants management. Before KHANA, he was with the Research Triangle Institute as grants manager and school performance manager. "I hope that I will apply my experience in grants management and my knowledge of donors' rules and regulations to assist KHANA and its partners to ensure transparency, accountability, and effectiveness to reach our common goal."



KHANA also wishes all the best to two people who left KHANA in August for new positions.



Lun Bunnavy worked for KHANA for more than 4 years as a financial officer at the Grant Management Unit and then a senior compliance officer in the Financial and Administration Department.

"It was very worthy time for my career path, I have learnt and gained lots of experience, not only the area related to my skill, but also the evolution of overall execution and management and I found myself very proud of had been involved in this situation."



Phon Yut Sakara worked for KHANA as the Organization and Institutional Development Coordinator in the Policy, Advocacy, and Resource Mobilisation Department for 8 months.

"Over the past five months, I have learned and gained a lot of experiences especially related to organizational development and capacity building with and for the NGO partners. Taking this opportunity, I wish to express my deep and sincere thanks to Khana for employing me since March 05, 2007. My special thanks are to all staff of Khana who provided quite a lot of invaluable support to me. I was very proud to be a member of such a good family."



Khana is a linking organisation of the global partnership
International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Supporting community action on AIDS in developing countries

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