

# PURPLE BRICKS

ISSUE 22 - JUNE 2008  
KHANA'S MONTHLY BULLETIN

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## ALLIANCE HELPS KHANA TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The UK-based International HIV/AIDS Alliance (the Alliance) Communications Manager visited KHANA during June to strengthen KHANA's communication, and to provide valuable feedback on other aspects of KHANA's existing structures. KHANA recognizes the importance of communication; internally and within the community, and sees it as an effective means to support the scale-up of activities and performances. Further, KHANA sees effective communication as a 'tool' to aid and strengthen the delivery of KHANA's strategic plan 2008-10.

The five-day discussion held between the Alliance communications official and KHANA communications committee members in Phnom Penh between 2-6 June developed a draft version of KHANA's first-ever communications strategy. "I think it [the Communications Strategy] is important because it will hopefully equip KHANA with more skills to reach more people

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## ENTERTAINMENT WORKERS HAIL GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION



Khema sits on the floor in a room and applies her makeup. She is a 24-year-old single mother, with two kids, and became a direct entertainment worker after fell into debt.

A few months ago, Khema had no job and no income at all, as her brothel owner in Siem Reap closed his business. This impacted Khema significantly and caused her to spiral deeper into a state of destitute. She experienced a large amount of stress as she attempted to provide her two young children and elderly mother with basic necessities, such as food.

"I am so happy that I can earn money again. About three months ago, my brothel owner closed his business because he heard from police about fines and the detention centres" said the 24-year-old single mother, whose husband had another wife. With no skills and little education, Khema left her home village in Kampong Thom to be a karaoke lady and then a brothel-based entertainment/sex worker in Siem Reap town (the main town in Cambodia which attracts the most tourists).

Sitting on the floor in a room with a wooden bed at around 5 pm, Khema applies make-up to

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# STRENGTHENING HIV/AIDS DOCUMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

With support from USAID, through Community Reach, KHANA organised and facilitated a four-day training on "Documenting and Communicating HIV/AIDS Work" in June for relevant officials from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs).

The training aimed at building practical skills and improving the working process for documentation

and communication for NGOs and CBOs workers responding to HIV and AIDS and it also focused on organizational plans, programme work and external relations. The training toolkits are based on the International HIV/AIDS Alliance's practical experiences.

Thirty participants from 16 NGOs and CBOs working in the field of HIV and AIDS attended the training in KHANA office on 23-26 June.



*Trainees from NGOs and CBOs are evaluating the training and making recommendations for future courses.*

## Continued from p. 1: Entertainment workers hail government's intervention

her face before opening for business. With a big smile, she expressed the rush of happiness she had when she and her colleagues in the brothel discovered that they are free from threats from law enforcers. "Our shop owner told us that we act as massagers, not prostitutes. Doing this, we will avoid police arrest. I, of course still have a fear of being arrested by the police, but I have no choice. If I do not sell myself for sex, I cannot earn money to support my children and mother who live in the village, or me."

On 15th February, the government launched a new legislation to punish all crimes against human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The law states that the country needs to implement the UN protocol on the issue while human rights and dignity must be protected and the country's proper customs and cultural value must be improved. Article 23 of the law states: "Prostitution" in this law shall mean having sexual intercourse with an unspecified person or other sexual conduct of all kinds in exchange for anything of value".

According to reports from local non-governmental organisations, local police (in a few provinces) have instructed owners of karaoke parlors, night clubs, and bars that they will be fined if premises contain condoms. The reports showed that since the inception of the law some brothels have

closed and people are now afraid of talking openly about, or displaying condoms. The reports also included that during some of the brothel crackdowns direct and indirect entertainment workers are becoming victims of sexual abuse and robbery, whilst in police custody. Choeun Sinoeun, Programme Manager of Men's Health Cambodia, a local NGO based in Siem Reap, said since the announcement of the new law, several brothels have converted to massage and karaoke parlors but sex is still offered. However, he said, it is difficult for his organisation to reach entertainment workers; to provide them education on healthcare, especially on HIV/AIDS and STI prevention. "Direct entertainment workers do not want to show up due to their fear of being arrested by the police and being detained," he said. With support from KHANA, he said, his organization reaches 20 direct entertainment workers and 1,100 indirect entertainment workers in Siem Reap; to provide them with HIV/AIDS and STI education and prevention via the promotion of the 100% condom use programme (Cambodia's nationally commended strategy).

On 4th June, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sar Kheng explained the legal action that would be taken against officials accused of sexually abusing or robbing entertainment workers, who have been taken into custody during brothel crackdowns. His comment was made one day after hundreds of entertainment workers held a rally to protest the new law. Some protesters accused police and other law enforcers of poorly implementing the law. Furthermore some protesters spoke about the physical abuse, gang rape, and robbery that had been witnessed during some of these raids. Sar Kheng said the government, especially the Ministry of Interior, will take legal action against any official who is accused of such incidences. However, evidence must be provided by the victims before action can be taken.

A commitment to improving the protection of direct and indirect entertainment workers is good news for Kema and other entertainment workers nationwide. "I am really happy to hear this and I hope that police will not abuse and rob us," she said. Khema, a single mother of two kids, decided to be a direct sex worker to deal with her debt which incurs a high interest in the village. "I have no money to pay back to my creditor. With no choice, I have to be a sex worker. I know such business is affecting to the Khmer culture and my reputation as well. But if I do not take this business, I do not know how my family and I can survive," she added.

According to the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs (NCHADS), it is estimated that there are 3,430 direct entertainment workers and 13,723 indirect entertainment workers in Cambodia. KHANA, through its implementing partners nationwide, reached 1,568 direct entertainment workers and 4,715 indirect entertainment workers by providing them with education of HIV/AIDS and STD preventions, last year.

Many Cambodian women depend financially on their husbands. Some of them, expressed that if they became widows, they will be burdened; poverty would increase and their literacy levels would plateau. "As I am a poor widow who has very little education, I do not know what to do to make money. When my kids were sick, I borrowed some money from my neighbours but I had no money to pay them back and the interest become higher and higher," Khema said.

"I want to appeal to the government to help develop the rural areas, provide jobs and vocational training and skills to women, and to provide opportunities to girls to attend school to reach a higher education, so that they can have a good future and will be able to avoid the work I am doing." (Story and pictures by Chhay Sopha)



*A direct entertainment worker/brothel-based sex worker plays a karaoke song at a brothel in Sihanouk Ville. The 34-year-old woman does not know how to survive without her job as she is poor and illiterate.*

# FORUM TO DISCUSS WORLD FOOD CRISIS

While the world is facing a food crisis, many countries are making attempts to address these issues. Agricultural experts and a group of senior journalists from Asia and Europe have tried to uncover effective solutions for global consumers. The discussion was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in June and reported in the Asian-European Editors' forum. The article is titled "The World Food Crisis: Effects on Asia and Solutions".

Dr. Sebastian PAUST, Executive Director of Asian Development Bank, said both short-term and long-term factors can cause the food prices to increase in the world. The six short-term factors, he said, are the decline of US dollars, decline of food stocks, natural disasters, conflict and political unrest in several countries that disrupted local productions, disputable short-term policy responses in key importing and exporting countries, and heavy influence of market speculation. The long-term factors are stagnation of food grain yields and slow pace of development of high-yielding, distortion of incentive for agricultural production, neglecting of rural areas and insufficiency of agricultural sector in Asian nations, demographic pressure with growing of population while agricultural land is losing, energy price is rising causing the prices of agricultural tools such as fertilizers and fuels are high, Asian people eat more and better food (more consumption), diversion of cereal use from food to alternative fuel (biofuel), and the global trade issue, he added.

Speaking to the forum, Duncan Macintosh, spokesperson of the Manila-based International Rice Research Institute, the climate change followed by drought, flooding, and salinity is the worst problem of agriculture for present and the future. He, however, suggested that Asia can increase its agricultural products and food security until it improves technology by taking into account the climate change and taking full advantage of revolutions in biology, genetics,

information technology and communications.

Since early this year, the world has been living in a food crisis and the international food aid agencies warned to cut off or end food supplies to food seekers. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) feeds nearly 89 million people, including 58.8 million children, worldwide, WFP have announced that they will cut their food supplies this year. In Cambodia, the WFP has already cut food supplies to some 450,000 Cambodian primary-school students, who previously received breakfast. WFP, however, confirmed in April that monthly food rations to: People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) households; in addition to the food support to TB patients, pregnant and lactating women and their infants under the Mother Child Health programme will continue without interruption throughout 2008. By the end of 2008, WFP expects to distribute over 5,200 metric tons of food to 70,000 PLHIV and OVC beneficiaries alone and with the recent Cambodian government's contribution of 3,000 metric tons of rice to WFP, together with other donations will be used to target the most in need. On April 23, German government announced to provide food support with \$2.25 million dollars by an additional \$15 million to Cambodia through WFP. According to a press release from the German embassy in Phnom Penh on 18 June, the Food Aid is not seen by the German government as a structural support to developing partners but its contributions to WFP are made available to safeguard the needs for survival of people in need.



Senior journalists and agricultural experts from Asia and Europe attend the Asian-European Editors' forum on "The World Food Crisis: Effects on Asia and Solutions" on 12-15 June.

Dr. Kwanchai A. GOMEZ, Executive Director of the Thai Rice Foundation, said the rice sources in Asia on a path of depletion and it is no longer Asia's isolated problem anymore, but the whole world. She urged the governments to push to produce more agricultural products to meet the consumers' needs.

Vichai SRIPRASERT, Honorable President of the Thai Rice Exporters Association, and President of the Riceland International Ltd in Bangkok, said high price means low sale and farmers always ask for high price but they are wrong. "If the price is too high, then only a small amount of rice is sold. If I were a farmer, I would not ask for high price of rice but I would ask for more water and more irrigation," he said. Vichai also asserted that the current financial, fuel and commodity crisis influences the rising rice prices.

Some 50 participants from Cambodia, Britain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Czech, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and Vietnam, attended the forum organised by Germany's Konrad Adenauer Foundation on 12-15 June. *(Story and picture by Chhay Sopha)*

## Continued from p. 1: Alliance helps KHANA to develop communications strategy



Simon Moore, the Alliance's Head of Communications Team, presents a draft of communications strategy discussed with KHANA Communications Committee Members to all KHANA staff.

and to have more of an impact on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Cambodia and to improve people's lives", said Simon Moore, Alliance Head of Communications. He also explained how effective communications can contribute positively when influencing policy makers, and with the mobilization of resources. He said KHANA is very well-organized and is a well resourced organisation

that "knows what the priorities are and knows who it is trying to help and what it is trying to achieve".

This strategy will be further developed and endorsed by KHANA's Senior Management Team before it will be translated into Khmer and made available to KHANA staff and KHANA's 66 implementing partners.

# LAUNCHING OF NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR OVC



Delegates gather and partake in an activity cementing their commitment to improving the lives of OVC.

On June 20, many supporters joined the National Multi-Sectoral Orphans and Vulnerable Children Task Force to launch the 'National Launch of the Situation Response Assessment, Mapping and National Plan of Action 2008-10' chaired by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation.

The launch symbolized the commitment to the betterment of the lives of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC). In 2003 'Children on the Brink' the UN publication identified that 9% of all Cambodian children were orphans. An orphan is defined as 'a child below the age of 18 years who has lost one or both parent', where as a vulnerable child refers to 'a child who is either;

abandoned, living on the street, a victim of abuse, addicted to drugs and children of illicit drug users, and children who's basic needs are not being met'. The main findings of the Situation Response Assessment (SRA) found that OVC (when compared to children who have both parents) commonly: are more likely to suffer food insecurities and shortages; attend school less; show signs of distress and psychological burdens; have poorer health ; stunted growth if they are not living their mothers; 3 times more likely to die before age 5 years (if their mother is poor) than those whose mothers are richest; are less likely to hold an official birth certificate (which hinders their ability to receive certain food benefits).

To coincide with the SRA, the task Force has agreed on a Minimum Package of Support, to aid vulnerable people. This package comprises of food aid, educational support, health/ psycholog-

ical support, as well as life skills training and reliance support. The Task Force aim to equip 50% of Cambodia's households, with the minimum package of care, by 2010.

Save the Children Australia played a significant role in the 'mapping' activity and as Nigel Tricks, Country Director stated, "Mapping helps to bring various initiatives together". The mapping exercise highlighted the variety of Cambodian agencies and the several projects currently angling their services towards orphaned and vulnerable children. Khana too has identified this population group as a priority group and strongly supports further efforts to improve the current situation.

During the launch guests and participants partook in an activity which was symbolic to the ongoing commitment and betterment of the lives of OVC. The activity was inspired by an old favourite, aiming to demonstrate an element of respect to OVC. All participants were asked to paint their hands with bright colourful paint and stick them on a large sheet of canvas. These hand prints were then accompanied by their signatures; illustrating, enforcing a unified responsibility. *(Story and picture by Ms. Emma Gater).*

## KHANA'S STAFF CORNER

### ***KHANA welcomes two staff members and a short-term consultant who joined KHANA family in June 2008.***



#### **Mr. Moeun Soksan**

became KHANA's new Database Management Consultant on 19 June. "I see working here at KHANA as an opportunity for me to further develop my skills and to impart some my knowledge.

#### **Miss. Leng Kalyan**

joins KHANA as a Senior Accountant on June 25 June. "I am very please to be one of KHANA's members. I hope that I can learn and share experiences here at KHANA."



### ***We also welcome Mr. So Dane who joins KHANA as a short-term consultant for data-base development.***

**Congratulations to one of KHANA's staff members, Mr. Ros Sokheng (and his wife) who have just given birth to a beautiful baby girl.**

KHANA's Purple Brief is a monthly news bulletin covering real life stories of Cambodians living with, and affected by HIV and AIDS. The publication also raises significant awareness of the impacts of HIV and AIDS on the broader national and international communities.

The KHANA Communication Committee (KCC) is responsible for the development and publication of the monthly bulletin and the content does not reflect the views and opinions of the donors.



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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