



For a Child's Smile (FCS)

(Pour un Sourire d'Enfant)

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...there are few areas of the world where one witnesses so brilliantly the transformation from little ragamuffins into schoolchildren ... for a better, more fruitful life ...
(Mr James Morris, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme, after his visit to FCS)



"Our children"

J.M. Bouchard,
President

You will remember, in 1995 Papy and Mamie had been affected by these children hanging around in the streets of Phnom Penh and who took them to the garbage dump, ... you know what came next. And we often say that the best reward we can find for our action is the smile of those who are now "our children".

... It is for all these smiles that we fight, so that they flourish and become smiles of Cambodian citizens standing on their own two feet and feeling good about themselves.

Certainly, the economic situation in Europe is not ideal, the dollar rises, our resources struggle to follow the mounting costs of the programmes (that we strive to control), but if everyone within the FCS family puts in a little of themselves, all together, we will ensure that this beautiful machine for destroying destitution ... and to grow smiles ... will continue on and on.

Our children need each of us and will repay, in smiles, what we bring to them.

We must act urgently!

Five villages in which the poorest of our families live, have been flooded. In France as well, there have been floods.

But here, it is not only water. We have filthy cesspools, with a vile stench.

The flood water mixes with the refuse, faeces - because the shacks don't have toilets - and everything else lying around in the area.

It arrives up to one's knees. One cuts oneself on the rubbish, everything gets infected and one becomes sick. It is a real danger, particularly for the children. There is a risk of drowning as it happened recently to a 1 ½ year old child whose body has still not been found.

In those shacks the little upper room serves as the bedroom for the whole family, but life is spent at ground level, under the house. It is there that one cooks, has one's meals, works ... amidst all this filthy waste. Where to do all that, now?



posts and to set up tents whilst waiting for real rehousing.

But we have to find temporary plots of land buy and transport these materials. We had to open a special account, unbudgeted because not planned, and count on everyone's help to place these children and their families out of danger.

We cannot leave the children in such appalling sanitary conditions!

Our Social Team, completely involved in the field, started to help these families to move, as a matter of urgency, to cleaner, drier areas, alongside a road, for example, providing tarpaulins and poles because those that are in the water, already old, are no longer adequate and the "walls" were made of scraps of material or torn plastic, and of old cardboard as well. We also help the families to dig holes for the

With the aim of making a film about the history of FCS, our director friend, Xavier de Lauzanne, is looking for videos of Papy and Mamie, with the children, on the tip and in the Centre, which you may have filmed between 1995 and 2004.

Please get in touch with Aloest Production: +33 (0)1 41 31 06 82 or xl@aloest.com

Know your children

We discover each day situations of great distress



Phanith, Phanna, Chetra, 3 boys of 13, 10 and 7 years old, live near the new garbage dump. The father is a construction worker, an irregular, badly paid job when one has no training. The mother drinks and



does not work. The income is not enough for the family to live on. Phanith is 5 years behind at school and, because of malnutrition (?), Phanna is mentally retarded. FCS has taken the eldest into remedial class at the Centre, and the second into special need teaching. Chetra is being taught at the school near home. Here there are no soup kitchens. It is FCS that has to provide the rice so that the family can eat.

Sok, Tak, Youvin, et Tona, boys of 8, 6, 3 et 1 years old,



live in this miserable shack. The father, a motorcycle taxi driver, doesn't earn enough by himself to

feed his family. And, since they are too far from our welcome centers in Sihanoukville, the mother cannot work



Kong, Mean et Sreyleap, 3 girls of 9, 8 et 6 years old;

Both parents have irregular work as workers on building sites, but with salaries which are much too low to be able to support five people, above all because, in these jobs, employment is never secure.



Of course, the children are not in education at all because one has to pay for school. The two urgent things: to have something to eat and to go to school. We have therefore registered all three in the public school near their home, and give them one meal a day and some rice in exchange for their schooling.

Rithy, a 20 years old girl, **Sreypech et Sreyong** her daughters of 8 years and a few months old, **Sreypitch et Pring**, 2 cousins of 10 years old, **Domdey and Chivon**, boys of 8 years and 1 year.



Truly a catastrophic family! The grandmother is a scavenger and one of her daughters, Rithy, the mother of Sreypech and Sreyong, is a waitress. It does not bring in enough to feed 8 people. The other children are grandchildren from two different families. Only the two 10 year old cousins are registered at school, already four years behind. But they don't go and study regularly, going instead with the other cousins to beg in the streets in order to bring back something to eat... FCS's response: remedial courses at the Centre, for Sreypech, Sreypitch, Dondey and Pring in order to avoid their returning to the streets, morning and midday meals, plus some rice as compensation for their coming to school.

because she has to look after the two youngest.

We are schooling Sok and Tak, with a meal each day and, in addition, give rice so that the family can eat.

What has become of them?

The former students' party



Rather than holding the party mid-year, this time they decided to bring it forward, in

order to "launch the year" and display everything that they have already accomplished over the last months.

Firstly, they have changed their name and now call themselves SA-PSE (Solidarité Anciens - Pour un Sourire d'Enfant - former students solidarity - For a Child's Smile). The message is clear and was reiterated at the statutory meeting which preceded the party. 1°- to help each other; 2°- to indicate the jobs available in the companies where they work (more than 200 jobs proposed) and to welcome there those coming from FCS; 3°- to help the poor children as FCS has helped them.

*Their first action: to create a solidarity fund to help those, amongst themselves, who have serious difficulties.

*Then, to instigate actions with the aim of gathering funds

to provide emergency help to our families affected by the huge fire in August alongside the Centre.

*Thanks to the solidarity funds, several former students in difficulty are already beneficiaries of emergency assistance.

*Visits, by groups of former students, to our retired teachers (Mme Tong Phorn, Mr Meas Chân ...).

*Voluntary participation in the supervision of the boarders gone to Seam Reap during the Pchum Ben (Ancestors day) holidays and collections to participate in the activities of these holidays and during the weekends.

Amongst the objectives for the year: recruitment, by each member of the Board and of the Executive Office, of 10 new members; organisation of charity events with other associations and schools, etc ...

"Yes, we can" has become their motto. And since they are of their generation, their preferred method for communicating appeals and information, maintaining connections, reaching out to former students who have moved away, remains ... Facebook!

And they had prepared for us a magnificent and moving surprise by coming in such large numbers, to surround us and show us their affection, on the occasion of Papy's 80th birthday and of our 50 years of marriage. Two very beautiful parties organised in secret. Lots of joy and emotion



Chhun

We already spoke to you about him. A few years ago, we discovered him, in the dark, bedridden, without muscles, under a horrible tarpaulin held by a few pegs, next to a running sewer from the old dumpsite. He did not walk and could not even sit down.

His family was in darkest destitution. Faced by a situation without hope, his father drank, no longer worked and beat his mother who deserted their home more and more often ... After helping them construct a cabin where they were dry and sheltered, we took Chhun into our special class for children with a handicap. Thanks to the attentive care of our physios, Chhun started to hold himself upright, firstly with splints,

then with a walking frame which allowed him to start walking.

Today he is living in our "Source de Vie" home. He goes to school in the Centre, speaks a little French, plays chess and now moves around unaided, even helping the others by pushing their wheelchairs. Truly a resurrection! Intelligent and thoughtful, Chhun is fully capable of undertaking studies and we have every intention of pushing him as far as possible. What happiness, when one remembers the little chap inert and without a future!



For them, children in France are taking action.

***Alix** (15 years old) organised, by herself, a cake sale in her Versailles parish. Her friends dropped out at the last moment, but she took it all on from start to finish. ***Priya**, a youngster at the 2014 summer camp, has offered FCS 10% of her first month's salary. ***Bertille**, also at this summer's camp, organised on her own an exhibition and sale of photos for FCS in her town. *The students of the **college de l'Esplanade**, in Strasbourg, during an evening organised for FCS, were able to present a cheque resulting from various sales that they had organised.

A director's visit at the Centre

"Tomorrow, we are going crab fishing with the boarders." "All of them?" "Of course, all of them!"

And that morning, the day of my departure from Phnom Penh, more than a hundred happy boys and girls boarded three FCS buses, taking with them everything needed to hold a barbecue by the shore. It was the Water Festival, 5 days of holidays, so for the boarders as well, one has to depart from the ordinary!

They were accompanied solely by students, former and current, and a few staff, all volunteers.

I am returning from a 2 week visit for the Board of Directors, still under the

charm of so much zest for life from the children, so much energy from the adults who supervise them, so much genius in the coherence of the programmes set up to get them definitely from destitution.

And yet urgency remains at the heart of the FCS machine. During this end of the rainy season, several dozens of our families live in cesspools, their feet in putrid water. Leakhéna is on duty day and night with her Social Team. Christian and Marie-France, together with Pich, oversee and find new solutions.

How many beautiful scenes along the alleys of the Centre: Chhun, suffering of

motor function disability, pushes the wheel chair of a young girl more handicapped than he; they are joining their friends at ECAP (Extra Curricular Activities) for a karaoke session. Ly Heang, a student in the school of Hospitality, and member of the national rugby team, delights in practicing his French with the clients of the training restaurant. His dream is to work in a grand hotel in order to help FCS afterwards.

I was asked to conduct a Morale session, Papy's legendary meeting in morality, which, a year ago, became the Human Education programme. Priority, at the

Centre, is placed on strengthening the education of the person and the transmission of values. The current theme was "What is FCS?" Incredible!

The response given on that day was, "FCS is a school which provides the best for its students, but expects that they give the best of themselves". It means to work hard in developing one's potential, but also to learn showing solidarity.

At the boarding house and at the student home one expects the older ones to give a little of their time each week to help the younger ones.

The former students, who gathered together a few days ago for their annual meeting, indicated to us that the message was being assimilated.

During the breaks and holidays,

students (former and current) help supervising the boarders. Examples :



* During the boarders' holidays, at Siem Reap, for Ancestors Day

* For the evening study time, with the best qualified older students →
* For activities during the Water Festival break (here, the meal)



Message from Thierry, our new network facilitator

You are the strongest link!

Since the beginnings of FCS, now nearly 20 years ago, you have never ever wavered, never!

If local events are organised (concerts, theatres, rice bowls, sporting challenges...), if new supporters join us (sponsors, donors, patrons, volunteers...), it is THANKS TO YOU!

Often you tell us "But it is so little, I have only been an intermediary..." And yet it's already a lot!

It is a permanent challenge for FCS and for your local networks, to find new occasions at which to present our actions and to raise funds.

Your help is very precious to us!

A solidarity fair in a school, the showing of FCS's film at your brother-in-

law's company, a dance evening or a sale of pictures in the village hall... You don't lack ideas! But how to implement them? It is not always obvious... So get in touch with the nearest network, they will be happy to help you organise an event.

Contact details on www.site-pse.org (or <http://pse.asso.fr/index.php?lang=en> in English) or call Thierry on +33 (0) 6.64.84.99.54.

**Papy and Mamie have just been awarded the AidEx
Humanitarian Heroes 2014 prize!**

Martin de Roquefeuil