



*KROUSAR THMEY - NEW FAMILY
first Cambodian foundation
assisting deprived children*

Krousar Thmey
គ្រួសារថ្មី

The village of Poipet : prevent and heal familial breakaways

Semestral Report – July to December 2003



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Krousar Thmey is recognised as a charity in France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	GENERALITIES	2
A.	General Statistics about Cambodia	2
B.	Zoom on Banteay Meanchey province and on Poipet city	2
II.	KROUSAR THMEY IN THE BANTEAY MEANCHEY	7
III.	THE INHABITANTS OF THE KROUSAR THMEY VILLAGE IN POIPET	10
A.	20 single mothers	10
B.	The children living with their mothers in the village	11
C.	The street children	12
D.	The staff	13
IV.	LIFE IN THE VILLAGE	15
A.	The village itself	15
B.	Involvement of the families in the village	15
C.	The activities in the street children centre	16
D.	Flooding caused many damages	17
V.	OPENING TOWARDS THE EXTERIOR	19
A.	Collaboration with other NGOs	19
B.	Vocational training	20
C.	The outside cases	20
D.	Skill exchange with a Moroccan association	22
VI.	A SPECIAL AWARD FOR OUR WORK IN POIPET	24

I. Generalities

A. General Statistics about Cambodia

13.4 millions of inhabitants are living in Cambodia. 43% of the population is under 15 years old (in 2001), which causes serious problems for the social and economic well being of these young people as well as for their future.

87% of the children of school age are enrolled at primary school, but only 52% of these schools propose the 6 grades of primary. Moreover, schools are often far from pupils' homes, classes are overloaded, and teachers regularly blackmail pupils because of their very low salary (20 to 30 \$ a month). All these factors gathered lead to a fall of the rate of children going to secondary school: 18.9% for boys and 16.4% for girls. Children who stop school are then exposed to all forms of exploitation: work, violence, national and international dealing.

According to the "National AIDS Authority", the rate of infection by HIV might have progressively decreased from 300 persons a day to 60. But statistics also assert that 60,000 children lost one or two parents because of AIDS, and that 2,600 children are themselves HIV-positive.

These worrying numbers, which draw a black picture of the situation in Cambodia, place this country at the 130th world rank over 175 countries classified according to the Human Development Index (IDH).

Sources: Annual report 2002-Camboa from Save the Children-Norway;

Annual report 2002 from the UNDP (United Nation Development Program).

B. Zoom on Banteay Meanchey province and on Poipet city

The Banteay Meanchey province represents 4.3% of the Cambodian population, and has in all 600 villages. The particularity of this province is its situation at the border with Thailand, which leads to a considerable traffic between these two countries in this region.

► A Cambodian province very close to Thailand

As most of inhabitants of Banteay Meanchey buy their goods at the Thai market, at the other side of the border, the most commonly utilized currency in this province is the bath (Thai currency). Moreover, people listen to the Thai radio because it is easier to pick up than the Khmer one, they consume Thai goods... The inhabitants of this province are therefore out of their culture and their traditions.

► An intensive area of migration

Evenly, the inhabitants of this province are appealed by "brokers" to go to work during some months in the fields of the Malay province or of some provinces of Thailand. In Malay for example, the lands belong mainly to some big owners, who need manpower during accurate periods, like rice harvest for example, and appeal at that time to farmers of Banteay Meanchey.

It's therefore a recurrent phenomenon in this region: every year, men leave, in general bringing their families which cannot stay alone, for working during some months out of their village of origin. These migrations disturb a lot the rhythm of the villages' life. Indeed, children stop very quickly going to school because of these moves: they fall well behind their age group at school and they cannot follow after grade 4 or 5.

Moreover, the families cannot always bring with them all their children, because the journey is too long and difficult, which leads to many desertions. Other families also abandon their children because they can't simply afford to bring them up. The extreme poverty is therefore a cause of the high rate of desertions in this province.

► Zoom on Poipet

Cambodia's recent entry into the World Trade Organization signals the government's willingness to open up to the rules of the global marketplace. But has the country rushed into the WTO prematurely, without having the necessary financial regulations in place ? A new World Bank report has thrown light on potential problems... It says that almost half a billion dollars is being lost to national revenue every year, due partly to corruption and smuggling activities, many of them run by government officials. And the Cambodian border town of Poipet is a show case for the worst of Cambodia's

problem: well-organized corruption, smuggling of children and precious antiquity, runaway rates of poverty and HIV-AIDS...

The poorest of Cambodia's poor are drawn to Poipet, child beggars, desperate widows, manual labourers and orphans. Like moths to a flame, they arrive hoping to find a living but often end up destitute and sick. ⁽¹⁾

In the next paragraphs, three topics, which take a very important place in Poipet and thus in Krousar Thmey action there, are presented.

- **Drug consumption in the streets of Poipet**

Much of the economy of Poipet city is based on the casinos. The Thai people represent a large majority in the casino consumers, as gambling is forbidden in Thailand. The rest of Poipet's economy is supported by construction workers, labourers and young men and boys who haul goods back and forth from the markets on the Thai side of the border.

According to Graham Shaw of the UN Office for Drugs and Crime, "these are the people that constitute much of the demand side of the market for methamphetamines. This is the very nature of economic activity in Poipet. People need [the drug] to work long hours. It is an energy boost and it is linked with the high availability and low cost... people can maximize the hours they work and maximize their income. It is a mean to an end. They are living for today and they don't think about long term. Rough estimates made by the UN indicate that 75 percent of labourers and construction workers are taking drugs".

Moreover, many street children sniff glue. They say that they sniff because they are bored or, as 12 year-old Taing Uong from Siem Reap says : "when we sniff we see the stars. It makes me drunk, and in my dreams I see everything". ⁽²⁾

- **Smuggling, a source of income for street kids**

In Poipet, there is a huge business in smuggling, and a booming business in smuggling clothes. Many families live under the bridge situated in the no man's land between Cambodia and Thailand. The children of these families try to bring many second or third hand clothes to Thailand. It is not uncommon to see a young boy or girl

hanging around his body a dozen pairs of pants and recover them by wearing a large shirt. They look like young catchers, but there is a mythical control at the border and the kids can pass easily at the checkpoint. They go to sell all those clothes to the Thai market. ⁽²⁾



A kid getting prepared to smuggle clothes to Thailand

- **A children trafficking area**

Poipet, hub of very numerous goods trafficking, is also a city where human trafficking is an everyday activity. Women are frequently duped into entering Thailand in hopes of finding better paying jobs but are then forced into servitude in brothels in Thai

resorts or border town. Young boys and old men and women are trafficked to work in begging gangs in Bangkok. ⁽²⁾

The babies' traffic is especially widespread. Indeed, the demand is high, because begging with a baby in the arms brings more money than begging without. Families in extreme poverty have therefore a direct and simple source of income: 20 dollars for a baby that in all cases, they could not afford to feed... But people who buy the babies are not always willing to continue to be in charge of them at the time they have grown!

► A Committee for the Protection and the Rights of the Child

The situation in Banteay Meanchey adds to problems that Cambodia experiments in general. A very large number of families is in very precarious situation, and a lot of children are left out and find themselves alone in their village or in their city.

Facing with this difficult situation, the UNICEF has created in 2000 in this province a Committee for the Protection and the Rights of the Child, in collaboration with 20 NGOs, the police and the Minister of Social Affairs. This Committee is divided in 4 subcommittees: one for street children and children victims of traffic, one for children who work, one for orphans and abandoned children, and finally one for handicapped children. The Krousar Thmey protection centre of Sisophon is member of the orphans and abandoned children part.

⁽¹⁾ Source : ABC Radio : Asia Pacific "Cambodia : Wild West border showcase problems" – Friday, October 3, 2003.

⁽²⁾ Source : article from Cambodia Daily, entitled "As bad as it gets" – Saturday and Sunday, July 5-6, 2003.

II. Krousar Thmey in the Banteay Meanchey

Facing with the alarming situation of Banteay Meanchey, Krousar Thmey set up several programs in this province. These programs deal with the 3 intervention fields of Krousar Thmey.

▶ Educational support

⇒ the school for disadvantaged children in Poipet

Facing with the difficulties met in order to access to education in Cambodia, and particularly in the province of Banteay Meanchey, Krousar Thmey built a primary school in Poipet, the school of Prum Nimith, to send to school a maximum of deprived children, so numerous in this city. Krousar Thmey built the school, helps it financially (extra salary for teachers...) and maintains a free schooling for children: the association supplies the uniforms and the scholar material.

▶ Cultural and artistic development

⇒ School of Khmer Arts and Culture in Sisophon

To offset the deep lack of roots of which suffer the Cambodians after years of civil war, Krousar Thmey created in 1996 one school of Khmer arts and Culture in Sisophon (one of the biggest city in Banteay Meanchey). This school offers pupils of the two neighbouring public schools the possibility to learn one artistic or cultural activity: drawing, sculpture, dance, music or shadow theatre. All the teachers are Khmer people whose aim is to transmit their savoir-faire and their knowledge to Cambodian children, who will be the actors of the Cambodia of tomorrow.

▶ Child welfare

⇒ a prevention campaign

40 children of this school in Sisophon take part in the prevention campaign initiated by Krousar Thmey against the prostitution and the traffic of children. For this

purpose, they go two times a month in remote villages of this province to put on a theatre play and to distribute posters about these themes. The purpose is to inform the local population, to make them sensitive to these problems, and to warn them against cheap money.

⇒ **a village for single mothers with their children**

Still in the perspective of acting upstream from problems linked to street children, Krousar Thmey built one village of 20 little wooden houses on piles to allow single mothers to live there with their children and to have a small piece of land to cultivate. In compensation, the women are duty bound to work to earn their life and their children are duty bound to go to school.

⇒ **two centres to welcome deprived children: a street children centre in Poipet and a protection centre in Sisophon**

The action of Krousar Thmey towards street children begins directly on the sidewalks of the three cities of Cambodia the more concerned by this phenomenon: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Poipet. Firstly, educators go in the streets to meet children who live there. With elementary care, they make contact with them as regularly as possible until they accept to follow them in one of the **temporary shelters**. Krousar Thmey set up 4 centres of this type which take charge of street children: 2 in Phnom Penh, 1 in Siem Reap and **1 in Poipet**. The Poipet's one regularly welcome Khmer children who had been trafficked in Thailand and taken back by Thai police at the border. The aim of these centres, which can welcome between 25 and 40 children, is to stabilize the child for a period of 3 to 6 months before reintegration. During this period, the child participates in the shelter's life, follows informal school or goes to public school, receives moral and ethics education and a lot of love. In the same time, the educators will find the origins and the history of the child; they will contact the family and the neighbourhood in order to evaluate the possibilities of reintegration. All the choices regarding the long term care are made in consultation and with the full agreement of the child.

Family reintegration is the best solution for Krousar Thmey. If the child left his family for economical reasons, he can easily come back home. Krousar Thmey's educators will carefully and regularly follow up the reinsertion and the evolution of the child and can even give a financial or material support if necessary.

When family reintegration is not possible (abandon, exploitation, traffic or violence by the family...), the child is sent in one of our permanent structure where he can stay until he becomes an independent and autonomous adult.

If the child is already quite old when he arrives in Krousar Thmey, we will orientate him towards **vocational training**, inside Krousar Thmey or with another NGO.

If the child is very young or heavily traumatized (victim of abuse, violence or trafficking), he needs a smaller structure to find relief from his past life and to blossom, so he will be welcomed in one of the Krousar Thmey's **family houses**. In these houses, a couple of "parents educators" takes charge of 10 children and gives them the education and all the care they deserve. They create a new family where the child can forget his past and discover what should be a real child life with a home, parents, brothers and sisters and a lot of love...

The less traumatized children are welcomed in one of the three protection centres of the organization: in Takmau, Siem Reap or Sisophon. Those centres welcome between 35 to 45 children. The children go to the nearby public school, receive additional lessons and follow cultural activities at the centre. They also participate to the everyday life of the centre and help cleaning the rooms, cooking, gardening...

III. The inhabitants of the Krousar Thmey Village in Poipet

A. 20 single mothers

20 single mothers are living in the Poipet village. They are widows or abandoned mothers. One of them arrived in June 1996, 17 arrived between January and November 1997 and two arrived in 1998. The average age of the mothers is 45 years old.

► Their job

Among the 20 mothers living in the village, 16 have a job and 4 do not work but are taken in charge by at least one of their children.



One of the mothers grows pigs just nearby her house to earn her living

4 are workers, among them 3 work on the Thai market,
3 sell goods (like noodles, cakes...),
2 are cooks in the Don Bosco cafeteria build in the Krousar Thmey school of Poipet,
1 irons clothes on the Thai market,

3 take care of abandoned young children,

3 grow animals and vegetables in the small piece of land they have,

4 do not work and are taken care of by their children. Among them, one is quite old and lives with her grand sons and grand daughters.

Some children confided to Krousar Thmey are too young to be welcomed in a Krousar Thmey centre (a protection centre or a family house), so they are confided to a lady of this village until the child is old enough to go in another centre. These ladies receive a salary from Krousar Thmey (around 10 or 15 \$) and some milk to feed the baby. They are the ones living in the houses number 10, 23 and 24.

► **Death of one lady**

On the 8th of January, the woman living in the house n°8 died from cirrhosis of the liver that she had since a long time. She was 48 years old and didn't work: some of her children worked and gave her money to live. She had 6 children: 3 are working and 3 go to primary school. Her older daughter, who lived in Thailand with her husband and their son, came back in Cambodia with her son to take care of her youngest brothers and sisters. She was a labourer in Thailand and her husband is a house guard. He sends money to her. She is allowed to live in the village for a while, the time for her and for Krousar Thmey to find a solution for the children.

B. The children living with their mothers in the village

All the mothers welcomed in the village have at least 2 children and the maximum of children is 6. In total, 81 children live with them.

Amongst these children, 53 go to public school: 48 go to the Krousar Thmey primary school built in Poipet (from grade 1 to grade 6), and 5 go to junior high school.

Amongst the other 28 children, 27 are working or are attending a vocational training, and one is a beggar in Poipet. This is totally contrary to the philosophy of the village which is: we welcome mothers and their children at the one condition that the children go to school and when they get older they have to look for a vocational training or a job. Ms Van Chit, director of the village, already discussed many times with the

mother of this child, but the child really does not want to change its occupation neither than its attitude. This is a problem that should be solved in the next few months.

20 children are workers (6 in Thailand and 5 on the Thai market)

2 are cooks in the Don Bosco cafeteria build in the Krousar Thmey school of Poipet

1 is a cook in a restaurant

1 is a casino croupier

1 is rickety and does not have a job

2 are attending vocational training: one attends a cook training with the NGO Friends (in Phnom Penh) and the other one attends a welding training.

C. The street children

Inside the village, there are two houses welcoming street children. Every month, some children arrive in this street children centre and some leave the centre. Here are the numbers about those children.

	Beginning of the month	Arrivals	Departures	End of the month
July	27	10	9	28
August	28	8	9	27
September	27	3	3	27
October	27	4	6	25
November	25	10	13	22
December	22	5	7	20
TOTAL		40	47	

Among the children arriving in the centre, 22 children come from the streets, they are all boys. 4 are abandoned children, 8 were repatriated from Bangkok and brought to the centre by some organizations like IOM (International Office of Migration) or CCHDO (Cambodian Children Handicapped Development Organisation); and 4 children have

been brought to Krousar Thmey as they lived in very poor families where domestic violence existed.

During this 6 months period, 22 children returned to the street, this represents less than 50%. 5 children were sent to the protection centre of Sisophon and one to the family house of Kampong Cham 2. 2 children (who were brothers) were sent to the NGO Don Bosco. And finally, 17 children were reintegrated in their families or confided to a family of their relatives.

► **Story of Tep Sambath**

Tep Sambath is a 3 years old girl. She has been brought to the centre the 26th of November 2003 by local authorities because she was beaten by her parents. Indeed, she was living with her father and his second wife. The father has had another daughter with his second wife. Her second mother didn't like at all Sambath and beat her almost every day. She now lives in the centre for street children. She is too young to go to school, so she stays all day long playing in the village. She seems to forget slowly the difficult moments of her life.

D. The staff

Presently, four people are in charge of the village and the street children centre:

Ms MOK Van Chit is the director of the village. She organizes meetings between the staff and the mothers. She is the one who has to solve all the problems when they occur and to take the decisions if needed. She also works as an educator for the street children centre: she regularly goes in the streets to meet the children.

M. EM Dy is her assistant. He especially takes care of the outside cases who live very far from the city of Poipet. He goes to meet them every one or two months to do a follow-up of their situation. He is also a street educator.

Ms TOUR Sok Ran is the person in charge of the street children living in the centre. She organizes activities with them, looks after them all day long, teaches them some basic notions of Khmer and mathematics, and helps the ones who go to school to do their homework. She also regularly goes in the street to meet kids.

Lastly, Ms SENG Hoeun is the cook for the staff and the children of the centre.

In February 2004, a new staff will be recruited, in order to help Ms Van Chit in the management of the village and of the outside cases. He will also go regularly in the streets to meet the children.

Every month, all the staff gather together to talk about important subjects like the working rules in Krousar Thmey organization, the education of street children, the schedule for the next month, and they insist on the importance of solidarity between the staff if they want to produce a good job together.

Sometimes, the staff attends some training or seminars. For example, Ms Van Chit went on the 27th of August to attend the Committee Meeting on acting against child labour at Provincial Social Affairs Office. On the 4th of September, Ms TOUR Sok Ran attended a meeting organized by the NGO Don Bosco about child protection. They also participate to regular meetings with most of the NGOs working in Poipet (see chapter V.A)

IV. Life in the village

A. The village itself

The village counts 25 small wooden houses, build on a land not far from the Thai border.

20 houses welcome the lonely mothers and their children.

2 houses are dedicated to the street children centre: the girls and the young boys sleep in these houses.

1 house is the main office, where Ms Van Chit and M. Dy work.

2 other houses are staff's houses.

Moreover, there is a big room for the kitchen and a bigger house, which was called the kindergarten. As now all the children of the village go to school or work, there is no more reason to have a kindergarten. So this house is a classroom for the street children and a dormitory for the oldest street children. Since last report, it has been heighten to avoid flooding.

B. Involvement of the families in the village

During summer holidays, most of the children helped their mother in their work so they could earn more money during this period, and the living conditions of the families improved a little during this hard period, due to the flooding. Some children also did a summer job, but not directly with their mother: some sell fruits, some plucked grasshoppers to sell them (grasshoppers are considered as a delicious food in Cambodia)...

The association of the mothers of the village, set up in April 2002, stopped this year. The principle was that every family had to pay one bath per day (40 baths = 1\$) to a collective cash-box. This money was used to help the families when they had an exceptional expenditure like health problem, damage on a house... As some mothers didn't pay their part, they all decided to stop this association.

Ms Van Chit regularly gathers all the women to talk about the main problems of the village and the main events. Those meetings are also the place where arguments

between families can be solved. During those meetings, Ms Van Chit always reminds them to educate properly their children, to take care of their house and of their piece of land...

Normally, the families do not receive any material help from Krousar Thmey, as they already have a house, a piece of land to grow fruit trees and vegetables and as their children can go free to school. But Krousar Thmey often helps them financially when they need money for health reason. We also give milk for the mothers who take care of very young babies, and provide them with some clothes that we receive as donations.

C. The activities in the street children centre

Every morning, some children from the street children centre go to the public school built by Krousar Thmey. As all the Cambodian pupils, they go to school only half a day. The children who stay in the centre study with the lady in charge of them. They all study again from 14h to 16h30.



A street kid taking a nap in the centre

When they do not study, children help to do the house work. There is also a small vegetable garden where children learn to grow bindweeds, cabbages... When they have free time, children love to play outside: they play ball, they play a game in which you have to jump over an elastic hanged by two other children... They also like to play with the children living with their mother in the village.

The educators go round Poipet to meet the street kids two times per week. They use to go in the different markets where children stay during the night, they look for children in front of the big casinos... They ride motor bikes and stop when they see street children. They talk to them, look after their hurts and try to convince them to come in the centre. This is a very gruelling work, because most of the children are drug-addicted, and educators know than even if they accept to come in the centre they will not stay long.

When children arrive for the first time in the centre, they have lost all notions of hygiene and education, and it is very hard to make them study and be clean. But educators are very patient with them and never stop to teach them the good manners so that after few weeks it is getting better and better. Many children, when they arrive in the centre, have scabies disease, so the educators try to improve the hygienic conditions of the concerned children, and treat the disease with specialized medicine and soap. Some children also have diarrhoea, fever, cold... Educators have to face all these health problems.

D. Flooding caused many damages

Despite all the renovation works done last year to prevent the flooding, the village was under 50cm of water during the rainy season. The problem is partly due to the fact that the neighbours of the village always heighten their piece of land, so the land of the village is lower than the others, and all the water gather in this land. Hopefully, all the houses are built on piles, so the water doesn't enter inside the houses. Four trucks full of laterite were used to heighten the main path leading to the houses, and the women worked to improve the small path leading to their own house. A new flow system should be studied before next raining season.

This season is thus very hard for the families who see all their plantations dying. Moreover, this stagnant water is very dirty and causes bad sanitary conditions. It is difficult for the families to assume the consequences of this disaster.

V. Opening towards the exterior

A. Collaboration with other NGOs

Krousar Thmey in Poipet collaborates with many other NGOs, like Goutte d'Eau, CCHDO (Cambodian Children Handicapped Development Organisation), Don Bosco, Care, CWCC (Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre), Unicef and World Vision (Thailand).

Goutte d'Eau is an NGO which takes care of the street children above 6 years old. As Krousar Thmey, they start to work in the streets to get in touch with the street children and try to pursue them to follow the educators in a centre of the association. They have 3 different centres in Poipet. The first one welcome children who come directly from the street. Kids can sleep in the centre and receive some food. They are totally free to go back in the street if they want to. If they stay 2 weeks in this centre, then they are transferred to the second centre. As this centre receive only children who have stabilize themselves at least 2 weeks, it sees less journeys there and back to the street. This centre tries to give a balance to children. Then, once the child has spent more than 4 months in this centre, he finally goes to the third centre, which is the long-term solution proposed by Goutte d'Eau. They try to teach the children to get over with drug addiction, they teach the young girls to defend themselves... Goutte d'Eau also gives alphabetization lessons and teaches them basic knowledge about mathematics, geography, history and general culture. Progressively children are integrated into the public scholar system. Moreover, Goutte d'Eau organizes vocational trainings for children above 15. Krousar Thmey often sends some children in these trainings. The trainings are about hairdressing or sewing for the girls and mechanics or house-building for the boys. "7 on 10 in average find a job at the end of these trainings" says Sam Sovannarith, director of a centre of the NGO.

World Vision is a Thai NGO who takes care of the Cambodian children working on the Thai market at the border between the two countries.

All the organizations in Poipet gather every month to talk about their work. They share information about the poor families they have met and try to see which NGO could take care of them. They also discuss between the different NGOs going in the streets to meet the children living there to share their experience, divide up the different locations or the different cases. For example, Goutte d'Eau takes care of the drug-addicted

children whether Krousar Thmey welcomes children whatever their age is, even very young. They also try to avoid that one child goes from NGO to NGO without stabilizing himself in any of it.

B. Vocational training

The action of Krousar Thmey aims to lead children towards an independent and responsible adult life. To reach this objective, children have to study after finishing school or to attend a vocational training, in order to have enough knowledge to find a job that will allow them to live in dignity. For this, Krousar Thmey works in collaboration with other NGOs specialized in vocational trainings. Some are in Poipet but some others are in Phnom Penh : children can then live in one of our centres in Phnom Penh if they need.

Presently, two children of the village chose to follow a vocational training: one girl, 18 years old, who lived with her mother in the house n°15, went to Phnom Penh to follow a cooking training with the NGO Friends. One boy, 20 years old, went to Sisophon to study welding.

Two other children, welcomed in the street children centre, were orientated towards a vocational training. They were too old and had a too low scholar level to reintegrate a normal scholar curriculum, so the training was the best solution for them. One girl, 14 years old, studies sewing with the NGO FRA (Field Relief Agency), and another girl (15 years old) learns hair dressing with the NGO AFEC (Avenir des Femmes et Enfants du Cambodge).

C. The outside cases

The village of Poipet has been built in order to give to deprived children correct living conditions and the opportunity to go to school, and thus to prevent them from escaping to the street. In the same wish to prevent problems with children, Krousar Thmey supports some children living in very poor families by giving them some money, some clothes, scholar material or powder milk for young babies. Each month, it is between 32 and 42 families who are supported and visited by the Krousar Thmey staff. Those children are called "outside cases".

We also call “outside cases” the children who spend some time in the street children centre and who were reintegrated in their family.

The powder milk is provided to families who have one or several babies. This hints that the health of the mothers is so poor that they do not furnish milk rich enough for their babies. They are thus forced to go and find a complementary food for their children. Some mothers do not produce milk at all, and for some other families the milk is necessary because of the death of the mother. This aid lasts approximately one year, the time for the baby to be able to eat rice. The centre distributes 2 kg of powder milk to every needy baby. From July to December, the centre distributed totally 108 kg of milk. When Ms Van Chit gives the milk to the parents, she gives them some advice about hygienic topics : she reminds them to boil the water before mixing it to the milk, to wash the baby’s bottle correctly, to read carefully the dosage of the milk (written in Khmer on the tins)... This assistance stops as soon as the baby is old enough to eat rice (around 1 year old).

Moreover, the centre also provides food to the needy families: rice (145 kg distributed during the year 2003), oil (20 kg) and some fish.

Some other families receive a small capital to start an economical activity or receive a help in nature. Many receive a bicycle, so that the child can use it to go to school, and the parents can use it to go and sell some goods or fruits and vegetables to the market.

At last, some families receive a monthly financial support : this helps them live in acceptable conditions and allows the children to be sent to school without being a charge for their families. This support is 400 bahts (400 baht = 10 \$) per child or per family.

The assistance generally stops after 13 to 15 months, this period is supposed to be long enough to help a family improve its living conditions. After stopping, the staff continues to visit the family from time to time to see its evolution.

In order to know the poorest families, the ones who really need a support, Ms Van Chit and her staff work in close collaboration with chiefs of villages. Sometimes, when they know Krousar Thmey, they contact the association directly to inform it about a special family who needs help. Two times per month in average, Mrs. Van Chit goes to remote villages to talk with the chief of this village, asks him if he knows families really

poor with many children and tells him about Krousar Thmey. They also work with the other NGOs and have some information thanks to them.

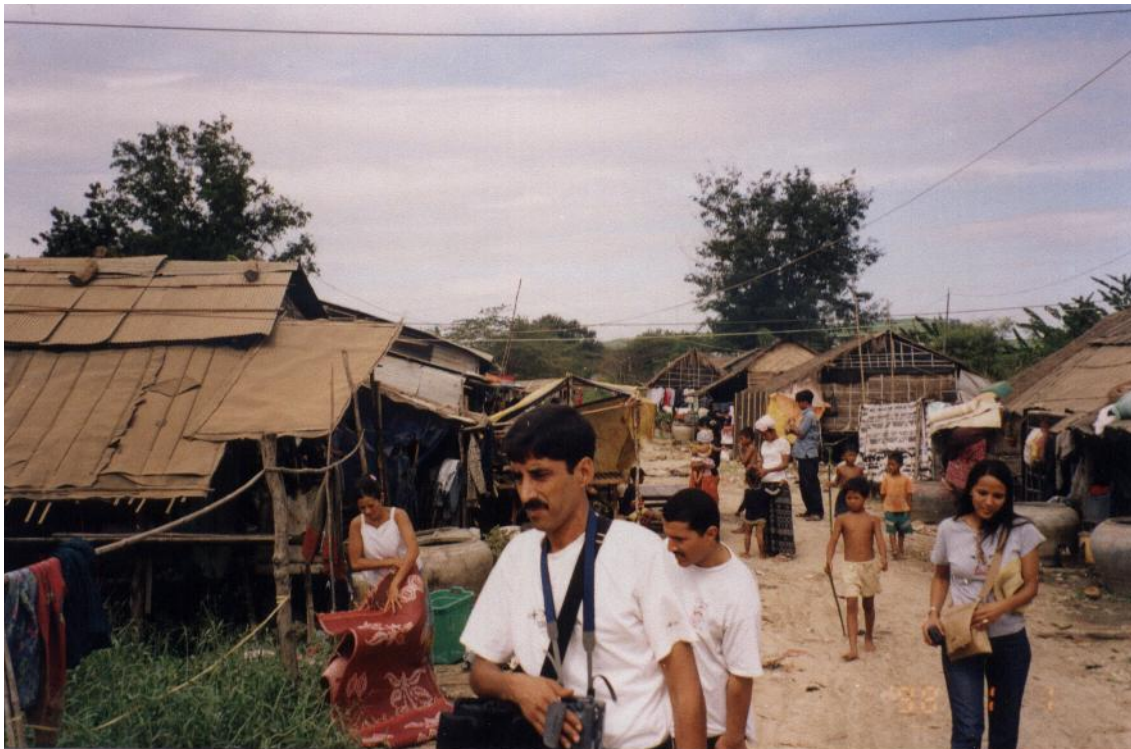
D. Skill exchange with a Moroccan association

In 2003, Krousar Thmey started a skill exchange program with another NGO also working with the street children but in a complete different country and culture: the organization, named Bayti and working in the streets of Casablanca, Morocco. This initiative is supported by the Air France Foundation.

In November, a team of 2 street educators and 1 social assistant of Bayti organization came to Cambodia for three weeks. Accompanied by Ms Thanath (director of the Psar Depot street children centre) and M. Phanna (director of the Chamcar Mon street children centre), they visited all the Krousar Thmey centres, studied our problematic, discovered a new approach of the way of dealing with street children, worked on practical cases... They realized that even if the cultures are really different, the situation of the children leaving in the streets can be similar and it is possible to exchange practice and methods between different countries.

During their trip around the Krousar Thmey centres, they came to Poipet and visited the village and the street children centre. Ms Van Chit also took them to visit the organization World Vision, in order to present them the kind of collaboration we have with other NGOs. They were really impressed by the city of Poipet and tried to understand the complexity of the problem in such a poor environment.

Ms Thanath, M. Phanna and M. Rop (educator in the street children centre of Siem Reap) went to Morocco mid-January and came back in February. They have learned a lot about the street children problematic in Morocco and now they will write a report about their experience over there in order to have a clear view of what they have gained from this exchange, which new methods or new tools should be set up within the Krousar Thmey street children program... They will also share their learning with the whole team of street educators of Krousar Thmey.



BAYTI team visiting Poipet to understand the problematic of this city

VI. A special award for our work in Poipet

In December 2003, Krousar Thmey has been chosen with four other organizations throughout the world to receive the 2003 **French Republic Human Rights Award** whose theme this year was the Women Rights. It congratulates Krousar Thmey's action towards promotion and schooling of discriminated women and more especially its village for single mothers and their children in Poipet. This price was granted with 15 000 euros, which will be used for the renovation of the houses and maybe for improving the water flow system in the village in order to prevent the flood during rainy seasons. The French Prime Minister Jean Pierre Raffarin presented the award to Ms Kosal Cheam (director of Krousar Thmey) and to Benoît Duchâteau Arminjon (founder of Krousar Thmey) during a special ceremony which took place in Paris on 11th December 2003. This was a great award for the work we do together in Poipet.



ALL THE CHILDREN FROM THE VILLAGE

THANK YOU

**FOR GIVING THEM THE POSSIBILITY TO LIVE IN A STABLE AND
WELCOMING PLACE.**