

**CAMBODIAN SCHOOL PROJECT**  
[www.khmerschool.org](http://www.khmerschool.org)  
**Progress Report for Fall, 2016**



The drought reported in the last Progress Reports is now over - a more normal rainy season has filled the wells and ponds again; good news for our school villages. Further good news is that we have a new school! Here are the funders of Sambour school, Jon, Tim and Rance, along with the teachers. This school was furnished with new



desks thanks to a grant from IBM. Our tailoring students are here passing out school uniforms they made for all the students at Sambour.

Our model for improving schools is to provide support for teachers, principals, and buildings as well as for the students themselves. Government funding is not adequate to even keep up, let alone



improve schools. Every year we have a meeting with teachers and the principal at each school, who present a list of needs. Here you see a teacher at Sambour (with her son) getting ready for our first meeting. On the left, you see this year's meeting at Poum Steung, our oldest and thus most



improved school.

Needs and priorities vary by school, so it can be difficult to decide what to fund where. We manage to be fair about this over time, but it does involve considerable head-scratching for Sarith each year. Here we are meeting with teachers and principal at Srail Pou. Long-term contributors may recall that this is the other school that was donated by an individual, some 8 years ago, a member of Resurrection



Parish in Rochester, MN. Other schools had gotten more support in the past, so this year we funded paint for the exterior (\$240), library books (\$205), garden soil (\$160) and gravel for the long and often muddy driveway (\$400).



Another form of support we provide are small cash bonuses (\$30 for teachers, \$50 for principals); concrete evidence of our appreciation for their good work. Rance is passing these out at Sambour.



We celebrated our 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation at JHP Skola this summer with our first homecoming party. Here you see one of our most successful students getting his sheepskin (and a bit of a hard time) from Roger and Sarith. Sophat is getting the next diploma ready. We funded training in teaching methods for Sophat. He is much improved at both teaching and managing. He has built a new home near the school. His oldest daughter will graduate this year. She is a good student, and likely to get a scholarship to university.

Almost half of our first graduating class, as well as many from our other classes, came to homecoming. Each graduate got a commemorative t-shirt. We had 150 made and had just enough for everyone. Seeing these students getting new shirts was reminiscent of handing out school uniforms to grade school students. Some of our JHP graduates had gotten new school uniforms from us years ago when they were in grade school. They seemed just as excited about it now as they did back then!



After the awards and the dinner, we all settled in to listen to the music. After a few minutes of this, some of the graduates pushed the tables together in the center and began dancing in a group around them, separated by gender. Others sat talking together. As the party went on, the groups mingled more, and many drifted off to have quiet conversations with old friends.

We brought a new volunteer English teacher to the party; someone who would work with graduates in town. Here you see interested students discussing how to start the class.



We are pleased to have placed every single student we have graduated in our first 5 years. This year, by mid-November, well over half of our grads have already been placed! Employers want time to train them before the holiday rush. We estimate that it costs a bit less than \$1,400 to house, feed, teach and place each JHP graduate.



It continues to surprise us to see what resources delivered over time can do to improve a rural school. It is not just attendance and graduation that improve. As teachers and schools are supported, a culture of hope develops. The teachers in these schools are amazing people. Our Board, our parents, our students and our teachers all say, "Aukuhn Sharan" to you generous contributors.

