

# Human Capital Project

2011 Sept/Oct trip report<sup>1</sup>

The 2011 official trip was the 2<sup>nd</sup> trip for the year, following the July trip done by John Humphreys to check on the progress of continuing students and do some research preparation. The trip included three people – John Humphreys, Rachel Connor, and Peter Gregory (from the Institute for Public Affairs). For John and Rachel, the trip was from 25 September to 9 October, and included stopovers in Brunei and Bangkok. Within Cambodia they were joined by Peter, and the trip included stops in Battambang, Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham and Siem Reap. In addition to HCP work, the trip included one day to see Angkor Wat.

Total receipts came to \$8225, made up of \$7575 payments and \$650 credit.

## Battambang

The main work at Battambang was done between Thursday 29 September and Saturday 1 October.

The “information session” (for potential new applicants) was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September at the University of Management and Economics (UME-BB). The session was translated by Chan Sam An and was held in the “American corner” library of the University.

The “students meeting” (for continuing HCP students) was held at 10:30am on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, at the American corner library at UME-BB. A second “students meeting” was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October for two students who didn’t come to the first meeting – Chhen Chhan Chhporn (m) and Chay Sochea (f). From the 1<sup>st</sup> generation (2007), all have now graduated. Nhim Chamnan had graduated in 2010 (and has been making HCP payments for one year), while **Phlong Puthearithy** (m) and **Chim Saroum** (m) graduated in 2011. Puthearithy is unemployed after completing his HRM degree, while Saroum has a good job selling mobile phones at Banteay Menchay for \$120/month.

Saroum indicated that he wanted to make his HCP payments at 20% (ie \$24/month) for five years, and pay retrospectively starting from January 2011, in order to speed up his repayment time. There is a problem with Saroum’s situation because any deposits that he makes in Banteay Menchay into the Acleda bank account will incur a \$2 fee per transaction.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (2008) there was one graduate, and two continuing students. **Em Sophon** (m) finished studying in May 2011 and has a job as an administrator for the government office in the Moung district. However, as his job currently pays \$30/month, that falls below the HCP cut-off and so he does not need to make HCP payments. He expects to shortly get a raise to \$45/month, but that also falls below the HCP cut-off and so he will not need to make HCP payments. Even though Sophon isn’t making any HCP payments, following his official graduation his work will count towards his 7.5 year HCP commitment. The other two 2<sup>nd</sup> generation students (**La Nybunthana** and **Ponlok Sidet**) are both continuing with their studies in accounting.

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<sup>1</sup> Written 25 October 2011

Of the large 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (2009) there were 8/10 students who continue to need HCP finance. This includes Chhporn, Saloeuth, Saloun, Sophy, Vechhai, Pisith, Chamroeun, and Nga. In contrast, **Souchan Thin** (m) now has a good job working with a credit agency (Niron ADEC), which pays him \$120/month. He wants to pay the remainder of his University fees, and start to make his HCP payments at 10% per month (ie \$12/month) for four years. If he starts to make his payments in October 2011 then he will have completed his HCP commitments by September 2015.

Unfortunately, it was revealed that **Chay Sochea** had dropped out of University in her first semester of study, even though she had received four semesters worth of HCP funding. Following our convention with UME-BB, HCP paid for the semester that she started (\$100) but received a credit for the remaining three semesters (\$300). At first, the finance office did not want to make this credit, but after some stubborn insistence by HCP and the intervention of the UME President, the credit was approved. Given this experience with Sochea, it was determined that HCP should not make regular payments to continuing students unless they come to the annual “students meeting” and state that they still want HCP financing.

There were two problems with the 4<sup>th</sup> generation (2010). First, **Sung Nann** (m) had withdrawn from UME-BB in the first semester of his study, because he got a full scholarship to the University of Battambang. Following our convention with UME-BB, HCP still pays for his first semester (\$125) but gets a credit for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester which he never attended (\$125). Second, **Vann Vibol** (m) withdrew in the second semester when he got a scholarship to go and study in Thailand (Agriculture in Sakaeo Province). HCP received no credit for Vibol, but Vibol did indicate that he was happy to make his HCP payments (for 2.5 years) after he graduates and gets a job.

The other three students from the 4<sup>th</sup> generation (**Soeun Sim**, **Ly Chanretthy**, and **He Davit**) were all continuing their studies, though Davit had transferred from business to agriculture.

The “interviews” were held from 1:30pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, at the American corner library at UME-BB. Seven students were interviewed (details in the appendix). During our visit the University was having a special on tuition fees, down to \$200/year, and so HCP decided to accept all seven students. This violated our usual intake policy because one student got a failing grade from school. The contract signing ceremony was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, with Chan Sam An (Vice-President of UME) signing for UME and John Humphreys signing for HCP.

At the end of the 30<sup>th</sup> of September HCP paid for two students from 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (\$425), seven students from 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (\$1400, excluding **Chhporn** who didn't come to the first students meeting), and three students from 4<sup>th</sup> generation (\$750). The sub-total was \$2575.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October HCP paid for one student from 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (\$200, Chhporn), and seven new students from 5<sup>th</sup> generation (\$1400). The sub-total was \$1600, giving a total of \$4175. However, this was partially offset with \$425 worth of credit (see above), leaving a payment of \$3750.

## **Kampong Cham**

The main work in Kampong Cham was done between Monday 3 October and Wednesday 5 October.

The first “information session” was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October at the American corner library of the University of Management and Economics (UME-KC). The session was translated by Srun Sarak. After

the information session we arranged for students to book in for hour-long interview sessions for the next day (3-4 students per session).

A second information session was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, in the American corner library. It became apparent that we would have many applicants and would not be able to accept all of them.

The “students meeting” was also held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, in the American corner library. Three students (Neang Ravy, Choeun Nith, Von Raksa) did not attend the meeting, though Ravy came instead on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, and Raksa was contacted by phone. The students were encouraged to “like” the HCP page on facebook.

There were no UME-KC students from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation (2007). From the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (2008), all four students (Soklin, Sophina, Chanty, Ravy) were all doing well going into their final year, and continued to need HCP financing. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (2009), only one student out of an original five still required HCP financing. One of the students (**Sueng Vuoch Leang**) had dropped out in 2009, one of the students (**Ngorn Lihor**) had been able to pay for herself since 2010, one of the students (**Choeun Nith**) had moved to Sihanoukville the previous year and suspended his study, and one of the students (**Von Raksa**) now had a job and was able to pay for himself. That left only **Phal Bunnak** who needed HCP financing. Raksa and Lihor remain committed to making their HCP payments, though it is less clear whether Choeun Nith intends to meet his commitments (as he had promised last year). Neither Choeun Nith or his brother (Choeun Nang) came to the meetings.

From the 4<sup>th</sup> generation (2010), six of the original seven students were doing well and still requiring HCP financing. **Sea Sok Kong** had withdrawn before the start of her first semester due to receiving a scholarship, and so HCP was given a full refund. In light of this situation it was decided to pick a “back-up” student each year so that if somebody withdrew at the last minute before the start of semester, their position could go to the “back-up” student.

The “interviews” were held late on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, and included 11 students (details in the appendix). The original plan was to take five students, though in the end we increased the intake to seven students. Chea Lay was the “back-up” candidate. The contract signing ceremony was held on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, with Mao Dung (part-owner of UME-KC) signing for UME and John Humphreys signing for HCP.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October HCP paid for four students from 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (\$900), one student from 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (\$225), six students from 4<sup>th</sup> generation (\$1350), and seven new students from the 5<sup>th</sup> generation (\$1575). The total was \$4050. However, this was partially offset with the \$225 full credit for Sea Sok Kong (see above) who never attended University, leaving a payment of \$3825.

### **Travel costs & other activities**

The return flights from Brisbane to Bangkok cost \$640, with a long stop-over in Brunei. On the way to Bangkok we slept in the airport, which turned out to be a bad idea. On the way back we went into town and stayed in a cheap guesthouse. Between Bangkok and Cambodia, and within Cambodia, we travelled by bus (\$5-\$20 per trip). Accommodation was in cheap hotels or traveller guesthouses (\$5-\$15 per night). None of the travel costs were financed by HCP.

Besides HCP work, we included a day to explore Angkor Wat, and we stayed in Siem Reap during the floods, which meant walking in knee-high water to go to restaurants and bars (all of which were still open). Other highlights include “fish-foot massages” where small fish eat your feet, and recording a radio advert for UME-BB in Khmer... where I said the following words:

*“Knyom chmoy John Humphreys, neak dam nang HCP, prajam proteh Australie. Phdol aha rupakor dol kon khmer 100 neak, samrap rien nou sakal vichea lie UME, aha rupakor hasip pea roy jap pi tun ai ni tor-tou. Pronyup lung!”*

This can very roughly be translated to:

*“My name is John Humphreys, representing HCP, from Australia. While I am here there is an opportunity for 100 people, if you mention my name to UME then you can receive a 50% discount on tuition. Hurry up!”*

Also, during the trip it was decided that any supporter of HCP who both sponsored a student and also came on a HCP trip would become “ambassadors”. This new role now includes Joseph Clark (who started sponsoring in 2007 and was part of the 2009 trip) and Peter Gregory (who started sponsoring in 2011 and was part of this trip).

In addition, there was some discussion about the idea of issuing HCP awards to the best students each year (this was first suggest by Muon Veasna), and also perhaps HCP awards to the graduate who contributes the most back into HCP each year. Peter also raised the possibility that “students meetings” could be linked to a more casual event with a party atmosphere.

## **Appendix: Students interviewed**

UME-BB

**Roeurt Sary** (f22) – E65. Accounting. Finished school in 2008, briefly went to University but couldn't afford to stay, so dropped out to study English and do dressmaking (\$20/month). Alternative plan is to continue with English and dressmaking. Dad sells ice-cream, and has large family. Would start in second year, so only needs three years HCP financing. Heard about HCP from a friend. Want to work for a business (\$400/month). ACCEPTED.

**Hoeurn Kim Han** (f21) – F17. Banking. Finished school in 2011 and works in a restaurant (\$40/month). Dad was in the army and died before she was born, mum blind in one eye and works as a cake-seller. Heard about HCP from Tuot Roeun (UME-BB English teacher). Wants to work in a bank (\$300/month). ACCEPTED.

**Hean Sangha** (m21) – E22. IT. Finished school in 2010 and now works as a bricklayer for \$2.5/day. Dad died and mum lives in Siem Reap. Currently lives with sister. Heard about HCP from UME friend. Wants to work in IT (\$200/month). ACCEPTED.

**Nga Sao Nou** (m21) – E45. Banking. Finished school in 2011 and now works as a bricklayer. Normally paid \$2.5/day, but no work recently. Dad is the village chief (low pay) and mum has no job. Heard about HCP from current HCP students (Saleoth & Saloun). Wants to work in bank (\$100/month). ACCEPTED.

**Mo Sichann** (m20) – D61. Management. Finished school in 2010 and has been working as a bricklayer for \$3/day. Dad is a bricklayer and mum sells cakes. Wants to work as an assistant manager (\$300/month). ACCEPTED.

**Va Malet** (f21) – E25. Agriculture & community development. Finished high school in 2011 and now helps her aunt sell sweets. Dad works in plantation and is a "fixit" man, mum sells sweets. Big family. Heard about HCP from UME student. Wants to work as a farm consultant (\$100/month). ACCEPTED.

**Son Pheakra** (m18) – E33. Agriculture. Finished high school in 2011 and now helps uncle sell chicken roasts. Alternative plan is to study English and help uncle (\$8/week). Dad is a moto driver (\$4-5/day) and mum is housewife. Big family. Heard about HCP from friend's brother (UME student). Wants a job in community work (\$150/month). ACCEPTED.

UME-KC

**Heang Bros** (m20) – D73. Banking (\$150/month). Finished school in 2009 and since then has been farming. Dad works in a teachers office in Prey Veng (\$75/month) and mum is a farmer. Would try to rent a room in KC. Heard of HCP from Mao Dung (distant relative of somebody from village). Came to both information sessions. ACCEPTED.

**Muong Chantha** (m19) – E46. HRM (\$200/month). Finished school in 2011 and now studies English in Prey Veng. Dad is a trainee teacher in Prey Veng (\$35/month) and mum is a farmer. Would try to rent a room in KC. Heard from a friend's dad. Quiet guy. REJECTED. (9<sup>th</sup>)

**Chea Deyen** (f24) – E30. Accounting/Banking (\$100/month). Finished school in 2009 and did nothing for the past year. Dad is a former teacher (now retired with pension of \$25/month) and mum is a farmer. From Svay Rieng. Would try to rent a room in KC (concern about whether that would be possible). Heard about HCP from uncle in Prey Veng. Alternative plan is to be a school teacher (\$40-\$50/month). REJECTED.

**Chea Lay** (m22) – E56. Management (\$100/month). Finished school in 2009 and has been farming since then. Parents are rice farmers in Svey Rieng. Would plan on sleeping at the University. Sister works in PP in a factory. Friend of Chea Deyen. Heard about HCP from uncle in Prey Veng. REJECTED – BACKUP.

**Yam Soung** (m21) – E35. Law (\$200/month). Finished high school in 2011. Dad is an ageing carpenter and mum is disabled. Live 50km away, would stay in a pagoda as he is an ex-monk. Alternative plan is to study English and then work. Confident & polite. Heard about HCP from receptionist at UME. Considered favourably because we have few law students. ACCEPTED.

**Sorm Vuthy** (m19) – D77. Management (NGO work = \$150/month). Finished school in 2011 and currently a monk. Dad died and mum is rice farmer in Kampong Chhnang (3 hours away). Had to use a monk friend as his “sponsor”. Live in a pagoda doing “Buddhist work” for occasional money. Alternative plan is to study Buddhism. Heard about HCP from UME friend. Good English, confident, but thought 10 years was too long as a commitment. ACCEPTED.

**Din Theany** (f22) – E52. Accounting/Banking (\$150/month). Finished high school in 2011 and now doing nothing. Repeated grade 1. Dad sells bread and mum is a rice farmer. Lives 10km from town, maybe rent a room or maybe ride bicycle to University. Alternative plan is to work in a Phnom Penh factory (\$40-\$50/month, 6 days a week, 7am-6pm). Seemed a bit nervous & confused, but was recommended by Srun Sarak. Heard of HCP because she sometimes comes to the library (which is open to the public). ACCEPTED.

**Chut Chhay Hon** (m18) – D72. IT (\$120/month). Finished high school in 2011 and now doing nothing. Dad died and mum is old and a corn farmer. Sister is a fortune teller. Lives 10km from KC and would ride bicycle to University. Alternative plan is to try and work as a waiter in Phnom Penh (\$60-\$150/month). Friend of Theany. Heard of HCP from commune chief. ACCEPTED.

**It Sakinas** (f18) – C88. Accounting (\$100/month). Muslim. Finished high school in 2011. Live 45km away, would rent room in KC. Parents are farmers. Heard about HCP from radio. ACCEPTED.

**It Yunues** (m21) – E35. IT (\$80/month). Muslim. Finished high school in 2010. Live 45km away, would rent room in KC. Parents are farmers. Heard about HCP from radio. Brother of It Sakinas. REJECTED.

**Chi Esas** (f22) – D59. IT (\$150/month). Muslim. Finished high school in 2010. Live 45km away, would rent room in KC. Parents are farmers. Heard about HCP from radio. Friend of Sakinas and Yunues. ACCEPTED.