

## Project Closure Report

Project Name: Resettlement Project

Project Location: Graveyard, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Project Started: July 27, 2021

Project Ended: September 30, 2021

Reporting date: November 05, 2021

### I. Overall to graveyard community

There are hundreds of tombs (more than 300 tombs), some dating back nearly a century. One solid structure that remains in place was built in the 1950s. The house contains two main rooms that until recently housed 20 different families before many of them found an alternative location. More seem to form parts of foundations for houses and furniture for some 155 families living here than their original intended purpose. The graves are mostly Vietnamese and Chinese and during Lunar New Year the relatives of the dead come to pay tribute with candles and food offerings.

The majority of the people came and lived in the graveyard since 1983 from different provinces of Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kampong Cham, Kampong Speu, Kampot, Sihanouk Ville, Kandal, Takeo, Battambang, Tboung Khmum, Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. Some of the families are Vietnamese and Khmer Krom. The graveyard is active for drug trafficking, gambling, violence and alcoholics for both day and night where approximately about 10-15% of the households have someone in prisons. Furthermore, they have poor hygiene and sanitation. Most adults are illiterate, and poor educated leading to children with poor education, attitude, behavior, and character.

### II. Challenges and Issues

The fire engulfed 5 houses at graveyard on July 25, 2021 at 1:30 am. According to the report from the police wrote that the fire was happened and started from the house of Mrs. Channoern, 39 years old. Her husband, Mr. Hoeurn, 37, told that after the family quarrel, he walked away from home and left the lit candle on the bed with mattress, blankets and clothes because his house had no electricity. He said the fire might cause from the lit candle fell on the mattress and started burning and affected to more than ten cans of gas exploded. He also told that the fire spread and consumed all over the house when he came back and ran for help, but it was too late.



The families suffered from the fire:

| No                           | household Head   | Sex | Age | Occupation | Membership in the family |          |          |           |           | # years in Cemetery |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----|-----|------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
|                              |                  |     |     |            | Man                      | Women    | Boy      | Girl      | Total     |                     |
| 1                            | Toek Channoeun   | F   | 39  | Seller     | 1                        | 1        | 3        | 2         | 7         | 27 years            |
| 2                            | Nin Srey Ya      | F   | 74  | Old age    | 3                        | 1        | 0        | 0         | 4         | 27 years            |
| 3                            | Toek Pov         | M   | 27  | Laborer    | 1                        | 1        | 1        | 1         | 4         | 27 years            |
| 4                            | Sreng Vy         | F   | 31  | Seller     | 1                        | 1        | 2        | 1         | 5         | 17 years            |
|                              | Srey Va          | F   | 58  | Seller     | 1                        | 3        | 0        | 4         | 8         | 17 years            |
| 5                            | Toek Chan Piseth | M   | 30  | Laborer    | 1                        | 1        | 0        | 2         | 4         | 27 years            |
| <b>Total family members:</b> |                  |     |     |            | <b>8</b>                 | <b>8</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>32</b> |                     |



Everyone completely lost everything that they tried to earn for years and lived with anger and hopelessness that they were not able to rebuild. The fire did not only annihilate the houses, but also the five tombs got burnt as well. No one got any valuables along from the house on fire, but escaped with their children for lives, but there was no injury or death except a few people got burnt for their fight for extinguishing the fire. With love, Bethel Mission team provided some emergency support to the families including rice, clothes, and kitchen utensils and tents. Without safe shelters, the suffered families asked to share their roof with the relatives, friends and neighbors within the community.

Nevertheless, the affected families filed the lawsuit to the police complaining that Mrs. Channoeun had to come and took the accountability by law to compensate for their lost or they will not allow her family to rebuild if they were able to afford for the new house building. They also stressed that the couple had to change her behavior as both of them always had dispute and threatened to burn down the house many times within the family before the fire took place. The couple always disturbed the community people owing to their family quarrel.

### III. Project Intervention

With the love and faith donation from our local and international churches and NGOs and friends, Bethel Mission was able to help rebuild the five houses that affected by the fire.

#### a. Project Consultative Meeting and Plan

Bethel Mission team worked with local community leaders and invited the affected families to join the consultative meeting and plan so that they were able to rebuild their house from the kind and heartfelt support from our dedicated and faithful donors. Every was excited to hear that they could have their house back. Mr. Sirivuth and Sinuon



encouraged the families that “We can help you rebuild your house, but Jesus can rebuild your heart”. He also stressed that “You have to live within a new house with a new heart and forgiveness or you cannot find any happiness”. The consultative meetings were conducted four time before the rebuilding project started.

Each family contributed 10% of their estimate cost of the materials and other personal cost. The families discussed with the contractors about the plan and the quality of the building. The Construction Agreement was signed between the contractors, house owners and Bethel Mission to make sure the quality of the building and its timeframe met.

Not long, Bethel Mission team helped the families prepare and review the request and letter of approval from the community and village leaders and commune chief. Living in graveyard is not legal, especially building house among the tombs as this would affect the owners. As belief, the owners or the relatives will be unlucky or business is not productive if the spirit of death gets angry or not happy.

Mrs. Vy, 31, the pregnant, with her daughter in English class, expressed her thankfulness to hear the support to resettle her house saying that “I am relieved and delighted to hear I can have my house back.”



Every house with the tombs inside and around and they have to ask permission from the tomb owners to build and live over the tombs or near the tombs and among the tombs. Bethel Mission team also helped the families to be clear about the implication from the tomb owners in their request and the letter to the commune chief as well.

Without any delay, Bethel Mission team went on quotes with three different construction shops and selected after the letter of rebuilding approved from the commune chief. Each house is made of steel, galvanized roof and walls, glass windows, plywood floor and brick walls at lower part with different sizes.

|                                             |                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mr. Chan Piseth: 9m x 4m x 6m = 616 sqm     | Mrs. Srey Vy: 5m x 3m x 6m = 90 sqm |
| Mr. Pov: 7m x 3m x 6m = 126 sqm             | Mrs. Srey Va: 5m x 3m x 6m = 90 sqm |
| Mrs. Srey Ya: 5.2m x 2.40m x 6m = 74.88 sqm |                                     |

### b. Project in progress

Everyone was beyond delighted to see their house rebuilding.





My name is Va, 58 years old. I was very furious with the fire lighters that caused my house and everything to destroy. However, I was very pleased to listen the encouragement from the bible from Sirivuth and Sinuon. I felt relieved and I felt not angry anymore. Both inspired me to forgive or I am the one who suffers and live without peace if I do not forgive those wronged me.



“My name is Ping, 13 years old. I study English at Bethel English Class and Sunday School. I am very happy that I have my new house after it was on fire. I would like to thank Bethel and Donor for the kind support to me and my family.” Ping told that “I ran for life at that night. My study materials, notebooks, textbooks and schoolbags were burnt down, but Bethel helps and buy for me so that I can go to school.”

### c. Project Completion:



**Hany**, 22, the wife of Pov with two children, told that “We lived happily in our house that we tried to save and built it step by step. I was shocked and depressed to see my poor house was completely destroyed. However, I would appreciate and thank God, Bethel Mission and faithful donor who helped rebuild my house and other houses for the affected families. I am excited and pleased to have my house back. I have never believed in Jesus Christ, but with the bible encouragement from Bethel Mission team, I believe and trust God. I found the reality of love from God and his servants. God is very amazing. I would also like to thank for Sirivuth and Sinuon encouraged me to pray to Jesus.”

**Vy**, 31, is pregnant and with other three children told that “Even my previous house was small, but I lived happily with my family. I did not think I could have any house to live. With regular visit and encouragement, I do thank God, Bethel Mission and Donor to help my family rebuild me a new house.”

**Ya**, 74, told that “I have never thought I can have my house back after the fire. I felt disappointed and regretted for what I had lost. After meeting with Bethel Mission for a couple of time with some encouragement, I knew I was able to get supported to rebuild my house. I was pleased even I had to contribute for the rebuilding plan. I would like to profoundly thank Bethel Mission and Donor who wholeheartedly and lovingly provided the financial support to my family as well as other four families affected by the fire.”

**Sokai**, 31, the wife of Piseth with two daughters, told that “We felt asleep after working hard at daytime. When we woke up the fire was everywhere around our house. We could collect nothing even our saving, we ran for life. We felt depressed and angry and thought we did not know how and when we were able to rebuild. We struggled from the empty-handed effort for nearly ten years to have the tiny house and live. We regretted for all we lost. We got some loan from the bank.

We were hopeless as everything was destroyed for an hour.” Sokai recalled that “We received encouragement from Sirivuth and Sinuon after their visit and some donation of love including clothes, rice, gas cooker and household utensils.” She spoke that “I have hope and felt excited to hear that Bethel Mission had the donor who can help rebuild my house. I would like to thank Bethel Mission and the donor who supported to rebuilt our house. It is better than our previous house.”



#### IV. Project Expenses by families

The total cost of the building was USD12,428.15 and the families contributed USD3,364.55. The table is to aggregated cost by family household with their total expenses and individual family contribution for the cost of the building.

| Name of Houseowners   | Total Expenses      | Family Contribution |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Toek Chan Piseth      | \$ 4,231.80         | \$ 1,120.49         |
| Toek Pov              | \$ 3,016.45         | \$ 490.89           |
| Sreng Vy              | \$ 1,784.58         | \$ 706.14           |
| Sreng Va              | \$ 1,619.15         | \$ 409.96           |
| Nin Srey Ya           | \$ 1,776.18         | \$ 637.07           |
| <b>Total Expenses</b> | <b>\$ 12,428.15</b> | <b>\$ 3,364.55</b>  |

#### V. Reconciliation Process:

As mentioned the conflict and the issues above, Bethel Mission team is working to fix the breaking relations among the lighter family and the affected families within the community. We meet the lighter family weekly. We meet and seek to understand about their deep issues. We listen and encourage them. We teach the bible and motivate them so that God can change their heart, mind, soul and spirit. We pray for them and they agreed to invite Jesus into their lives as their Savior and Lord.

Hoeun, the husband and Noeun, the wife, had never got along with one another for more than ten years. Mr. Hoeun sells drugs and gambles where as Mrs. Noeun sells her home-made cakes for the living. Currently, the three young children are adopted by the old mother in the countryside, the older son is living with her sister in-law in the graveyard and study English at Bethel English Class and the oldest daughter is selling labor in the Chemical Fertilizer Factory and send some money to them.



Mrs. Noeun told that “It was my mistake and I wanted to confess, but no one listened to me or talked to me.” She continued that “I was happy to see Bethel Mission and the donor who paid the compensation on my behalf to rebuild the houses for the families that I could not do anything to responds.” She continued that “My life was horrible, my husband never cared about the family and because he did this to me, I would also take no notice of our relations. We met and fought always. I ran out for life during the fighting happened.” Noeun reiterated that “I am pleased to have Sirivuth and Sinuon who take care of me and listened to me and encouraged me always to show me the new ways so that I can restore my family. I feel I am loved and I have good friends, brother and sister standing behind me. I am valued and respected. I am learning to live and trust Jesus whom I taught. I can forgive someone who said something bad to me and accused me.” She is trying to be good mother and wife, she told us “Conflict is not in her mind anymore.” We observe she keeps changing listening to the teaching from the words of God.



Hoeun admitted that “My life had been failed for more than thirty years. I understand that I cannot control myself for what I did. I was born without any good adoption; my parents divorced when I was very young and I was sent from place to place for living. I met the group of gangers and I used drugs and sell for living.” Hoeun stressed that “I was not valued by my wife as her husband, she always compared to others that they were better than I was. I was discouraged.”

After meeting with Bethel Mission team, Hoeun told that “I changed 50% from what I did. I learnt and helped my wife with handicraft so that we can sell for our income. My drug selling seemed very silent and on one come and buy. I do have any business beyond this. I know my mistake and I want to start a new and successful life.”

When questioned if they were able to confront with the affected families and local authorities and asked for forgiveness, Noeun said “It is what I want to do as I do not want to live with mask and discrimination from the people. I need peace and independence in my family. I am confident to go with the coordination and facilitation from Bethel Mission team.” Hoeun said “Yes, I am ready to face with them and ask for forgiveness.”

The reconciliation is in progress. Mr. Chuong, the village leader, heard what Bethel Mission team is doing he told that “I am happy to hear that the couple agreed to confess in front of the affected families under the reconciliation process from Bethel Mission team. I hope to join and invite the representative of the commune chief to participate the event.”

Bethel Mission team is working with the affected families to survey and will set the date for the Reconciliation Day so that everyone is accepted, agreed and live in harmony with one another. The Reconciliation Day will be held before Christmas 2021. We do hope and pray that we can raise more fund to rebuild the house of Hoeun and Noeun.





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Bethel Mission Organization

## Action Photos:

