



**LOTUS OUTREACH**  
INTERNATIONAL

**2009 Annual Report**



# About Lotus Outreach

An eight-year old Cambodian girl sold by her own mother to a European pedophile...a young “untouchable” boy working in a quarry in southern India...a woman forced to work as a prostitute in Cambodia’s red light districts in order to feed her small children. These are the people served by Lotus Outreach International.

## Our History

Lotus Outreach was founded in 1993 in Bir, Northern India. Chairman and founder, Khyentse Norbu, formed the White Lotus Children’s Program to provide educational sponsorships for Tibetan refugee families. Recognizing the dire poverty suffered by largely invisible local populations, he decided to expand beyond refugee communities and founded the first mobile health and education program for street children in Delhi.

In 2002, White Lotus was incorporated as a secular charitable organization in the United States. In 2003, the name was changed to Lotus Outreach. Since then, Lotus Outreach has expanded both the reach and scope of our work. While expanding access to education remains a top priority, we are also tackling more unsettling issues such as preventing the sexual exploitation of children and rehabilitating survivors of human trafficking.

## Our Mission

Lotus Outreach is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the education, health and safety of vulnerable women and children in the developing world.

## Our Vision

- We envision a world where every child has equal access to quality education and healthcare.
- We envision a world where children of all races and nationalities are free from exploitation, sexual abuse and forced labor.
- We envision societies that nurture, protect and educate children, thereby eliminating poverty and its tragic consequences.

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# Letter from the President

Dear friends and supporters  
of Lotus Outreach,

Welcome to another Annual Report from the desks of the various team members that make up Lotus Outreach International. It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I dedicate this document to the people of Lotus Outreach – a wide ranging team of dedicated and passionate people who have agreed to collaborate in the pursuit of liberating women and children from exploitation while empowering them with tools and resources like clean water and food, an appropriate education and necessary school supplies, advocacy, life skills training, and behavioral health services. The people I am referring to include our senior staff, project managers, volunteers, partners in Cambodia and India, our donors and contributors, Chairperson, Board of Directors, and – above all – the people we serve. Each stakeholder group is part of a team that has proven our vision is clear and our mission is just. Each has illustrated and validated that compassion in action works, even in very difficult times.

The small yet highly effective Lotus Outreach staff has tirelessly implemented a wide range of innovative new programs and pilot projects, provided guidance and consultation to our partners, identified and helped to resolve any quality, efficiency or outcomes issues (of which there were only a few and each was, in fact, resolved), led record-setting fundraising campaigns and did everything that was asked of them while being especially careful stewards of their very limited resources. Their motivation and spirit for the work they do has inspired me and anyone else who has had the privilege to work alongside them. They travel great distances, take their work home every day and make themselves available to their customers in ways most of us can only begin to imagine. We couldn't do any of the things we do as a non-profit organization without them. My deepest gratitude and sincerest admiration goes out to our people. Please join me in recognizing and appreciating them.

Lotus Outreach is also blessed by its volunteers. Some of our volunteers donate their time to help us as Board members – providing technical expertise, fundraising support and direction – while others contribute special talents so that we can continue our grant applications, fundraising and public relations campaigns. My hat is

tipped to all of you who give of yourselves on behalf of Lotus Outreach. We couldn't do this without you either. Our partners in Cambodia and India have risen to extreme challenges, invited us into their day-to-day lives and included us in the development of real solutions to vexing problems. They have carefully managed the funds we've made available and have demonstrated a great deal of willingness to learn and conform to heightened levels of quality assurance and program reporting – not so easy in developing countries where our partners struggle to sustain their efforts serving their neighbors. The work they do is at the very heart of Lotus Outreach. Each partner (and you'll meet them all in subsequent pages) is a radiant example of what's possible when people cooperate and apply their best intentions, thinking, and labor to seemingly intractable problems.

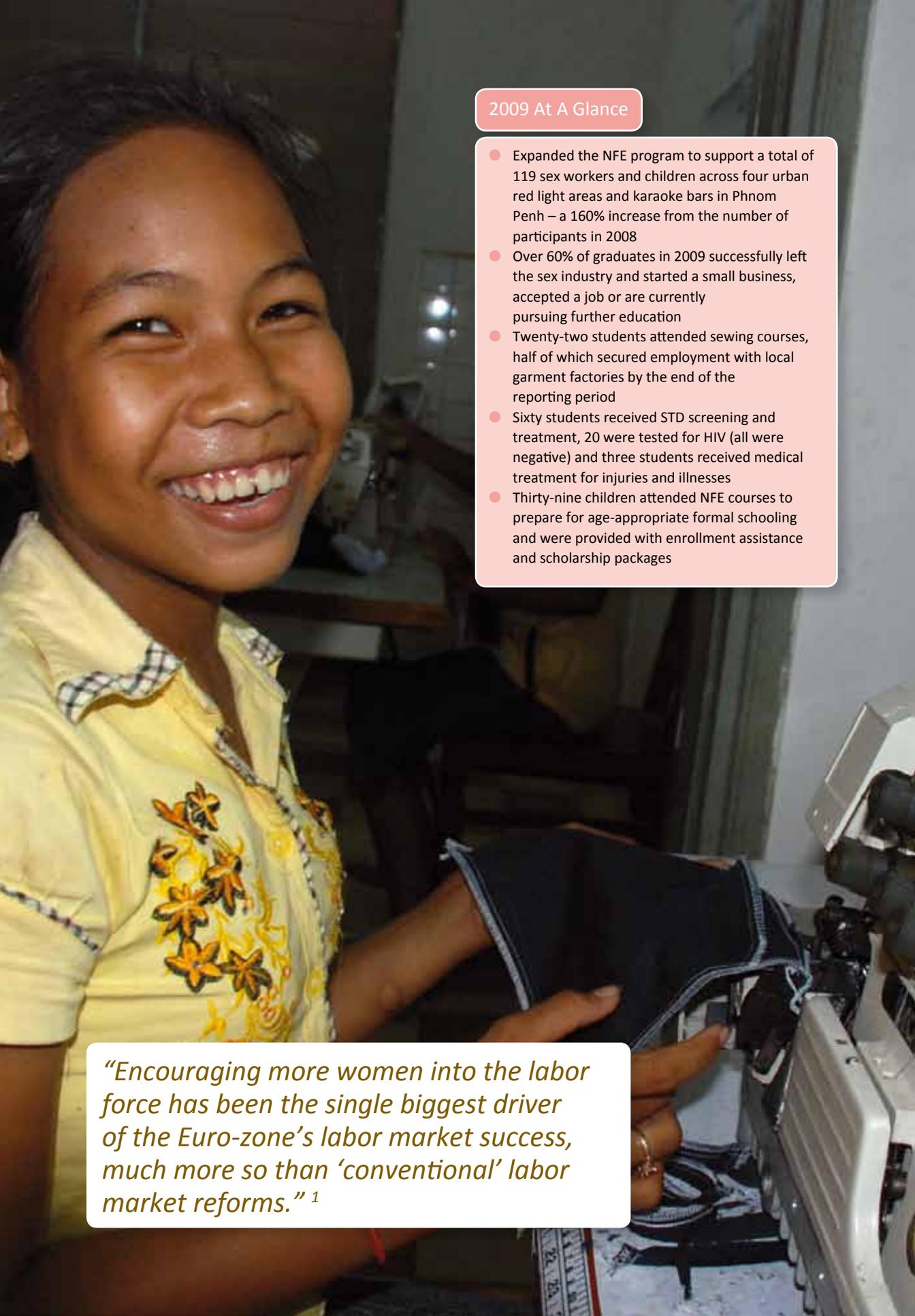
Last but not least I want to recognize our donors and supporters. You are the lifeblood that infuses every project, every partner, every staff, and every young life touched by our programs. In partnership with you, we are reaching tens of thousands of children and women, moving kids through school, teaching new life skills, enabling new economies at the grassroots, and defying conventional wisdom that would deter most folks from tackling the concerns we have chosen to resolve. By virtue of your generosity, we are able to house, clothe, feed, train, intervene, advocate and prevent in parts of the world that are often overlooked. At Lotus Outreach we take nothing for granted. Your gifts are cherished and handled with the utmost care so that every dollar, pound, mark and euro is optimized for maximum impact. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your unwavering support and the change you strive to be in the world.

As you read through the remaining pages of this Annual Report, please remember the wide cast and the deep team of players – including you – that make all of this hope and renewal possible.

Very truly yours,



Patrick Gauthier  
President



### 2009 At A Glance

- Expanded the NFE program to support a total of 119 sex workers and children across four urban red light areas and karaoke bars in Phnom Penh – a 160% increase from the number of participants in 2008
- Over 60% of graduates in 2009 successfully left the sex industry and started a small business, accepted a job or are currently pursuing further education
- Twenty-two students attended sewing courses, half of which secured employment with local garment factories by the end of the reporting period
- Sixty students received STD screening and treatment, 20 were tested for HIV (all were negative) and three students received medical treatment for injuries and illnesses
- Thirty-nine children attended NFE courses to prepare for age-appropriate formal schooling and were provided with enrollment assistance and scholarship packages

*“Encouraging more women into the labor force has been the single biggest driver of the Euro-zone’s labor market success, much more so than ‘conventional’ labor market reforms.”<sup>1</sup>*

# Non-Formal Education and Life Skills

Providing literacy classes, vocational training and life skills to urban sex workers and their children in order to help them find better opportunities.

As the importance of gender equality becomes more appreciated among economists and the international development community, Lotus Outreach is already ahead of the curve with programs like Non-Formal Education (NFE) and Life Skills that seek to bring women into the workforce. Aimed at sex workers, their children, and those vulnerable to recruitment in the sex industry, NFE offers a viable alternative to women who are desperate for a means to survive.

In Cambodia's patriarchal culture, women are largely dependent on their husbands, fathers or brothers for financial support. Many NFE students have either lost a provider to sickness or death, or have been abused by him. In either case, they are left to fend for themselves, unskilled, uneducated, and often with children to feed.

Rather than distributing aid, NFE teaches a broad set of practical, marketable skills that prime these women for personal autonomy and entry into the workforce. Over the year-long course, students learn not only a trade that will be profitable in their community, such as animal husbandry or sewing, but basic life skills that are hard to come by in the third world: literacy, mathematics, conflict resolution, nutrition, financial management, and HIV awareness and prevention to name a few.

Women tend to share these skills and knowledge not only with their children, but also with their friends and neighbors, amplifying the program's impact. And because educated women have healthier babies and are more likely to educate their children, this training course is a boon not just to students, but to the next generation.

## Case Study

When 27 year-old Kuen Sok divorced, she was forced into prostitution to provide for her two year-old daughter. After a year in the NFE program, Kuen has turned her life around. "Previously I didn't have the confidence to make decisions for myself, and often followed the advice of people aiming to exploit me," she explains. "Now I can read documents and signs and work things out for myself. For the first time I'm thinking about my future and planning for a better life."

Driven by a desire to leave the industry to give her daughter (now five) better opportunities, Kuen has managed to shift her source of income away from prostitution. "I've already secured enough sewing work to reduce the men I serve from eight to four a day," she says. Perhaps most importantly, she has regained her self-respect and confidence through literacy. "People looked down on me and blamed me for my situation," she remembers. "Now people respect me because I am doing something about it. I feel better about myself and can defend myself when people try to take advantage of me."

Kuen's story is typical of the women who join NFE. She wishes to see all women in Phnom Penh learn to read and write, "so they are not forced to follow my path and make the same mistakes I did."

<sup>1</sup> Daly, Kevin. (2007.)

Gender Inequality, Growth, and Global Ageing.

Goldman Sachs, Global Economics Paper No. 154.

<http://psforum.worldbankgroup.org/docs/>

Kevin\_Daly\_Global\_Ageing\_Gender\_Inequality.pdf





### 2009 At A Glance

- Provided 2,297 villagers with basic education on mosquito-borne disease prevention, reproductive and maternal health, hygiene and sanitation and water-borne illness prevention
- Selected 54 scholarship beneficiaries, each of whom passed to the next grade with flying colors
- Four self-help groups were established to generate and manage a communal pool of funds for microloans, immediately reducing reliance on loan sharks
- Distributed seeds and farming tools to 45 malnourished families in need of food security

*“Once poverty is gone, we’ll need to build museums to display its horrors to future generations. They’ll wonder why poverty continued so long in human society - how a few people could live in luxury while billions dwelt in misery, deprivation and despair.”*

*Muhammad Yunus*

# Integrated Rural Development (IRD)

Expanding access to education, basic healthcare, economic opportunity and food security for rural villagers and ethnic minorities in the Cambodian highlands

Phnom Kravanh (Cardamom Mountain) is one of six districts in Cambodia's Pursat province where poverty, lack of access to education, poor health and food insecurity are systematically interrelated. An insufficient diet contributes to widespread health problems among the poor majority, and the cost of poor health pushes many rural households further into poverty. Many of Phnom Kravanh's children suffer from malnutrition, and struggle to study and attend school.

In 2009, Lotus Outreach began coordinating with the Cambodian Organization for Children and Development (COCD) to simultaneously address these intersecting challenges. The Integrated Rural Development (IRD) program works to alleviate poverty and its tragic consequences for 5,167 marginalized people living in four villages of Phnom Kravanh's Samroung commune by offering relief in three crucial areas: primary healthcare, access to education, and food security/income generation.

Recognizing that a collapse in any of these elements undermines progress in the others, IRD seeks to shore up potential pitfalls to create a resilient scenario for sustainable development. From day one, the program is rolled out from the ground up – local people are recruited and trained to administer each component. Village health volunteers educate their communities on basic sanitation and preventative healthcare practices in exchange for a small monthly food stipend. Local education working groups monitor the scholarship program, and self-help groups administer individual microloans to needy families wishing to start-up a microenterprise such as raising pigs or growing soybeans. The program also works with local communities to construct toilets, distribute ceramic water filters and improve agricultural production.

By placing ownership of the three mutually supportive branches in the hands of their beneficiaries, Lotus Outreach and COCD are nurturing the confidence and autonomy that sustainable change is made of.

## Case Study

Before COCD's outreach in her community, Siem Saat's circumstance was typical of other poor Cambodians. In order to deal with unanticipated needs or emergencies, like treatment for typhoid or malaria, she was obligated to borrow from opportunistic moneylenders who charged interest rates as high as 20 percent per month. The 32 year-old jumped at the chance to participate in the COCD micro-loan program, which charges a comparatively moderate three percent monthly interest. Siem invested her \$15 loan into a bountiful vegetable garden that pays multiple dividends: it nourishes both her family's bellies and their wallets!

Although Siem garnered a monthly income and dignified work, she pushed to expand her profits and recently bought a baby pig. She will feed him garden scraps for a few months before she resells him for almost three times his original value! Siem will be able to pay off her original loan in full, and the interest will be deposited into the common fund, available to others like her in need of a small financial hand up.



A group of school children, including boys and girls, are standing in front of a stone wall. They are wearing blue uniforms and carrying backpacks. One girl in the foreground is wearing a red patterned dress and a backpack. The children are looking towards the camera with various expressions.

*“A study in India found that 12 percent of all schools were closed at any time because teachers had not gone to work that day.”*

*Nicholas Kristof*

#### 2009 At A Glance

- Established a strong presence in 85 villages, up from 20 in 2008
- Trained 900 villagers to identify and challenge corruption through the Right to Information Act
- Distributed 18,000 handbills and 4,000 ‘How to Monitor Your Schools’ booklets
- Ensured that the languishing construction of 85 school kitchens was completed
- Pried an estimated \$85,000 of official funding away from corrupt officials and funneled it into designated midday meals and targeted incentives for below poverty line children
- Provided scholarship packages and enrollment assistance to 715 children laboring in Mewat’s brick kilns

# Lotus Education As a Right Network (LEARN)

Expanding access to quality public schooling for marginalized children in India through independent monitoring, community mobilization and legal advocacy

Lotus Outreach believes that a functional public education system is the very best method for helping the next generation to break the cycle of poverty. We developed our Lotus Education As a Right Network (LEARN) precisely to verify that teachers do their jobs in the most standard schools in India, addressing one of the root causes of the dysfunctional system. The program operates in rural Mewat, one of the country's most destitute districts despite being located in the relatively affluent state of Haryana. Its residents, a Muslim minority called Meos, suffer a multitude of afflictions: lack of infrastructure, dizzying maternal mortality and illiteracy rates, and a flatlined economy.

LEARN's primary objective, to ensure that Mewat's school-aged children receive the free and compulsory education promised by India's Right to Education Act, is achieved by empowering the community as a whole. Mobilizing village elders, parents and officials to become activists for their children's rights, the program teaches citizens not only the value of formal education but also civic engagement and social cohesion.

The program's third year ushered in a number of vital developments. A public hearing in April 2009 gave local leaders audience with national education officials, opening a crucial line of communication between the grassroots and authorities. We initiated a gradual introduction of gender equality to this patriarchal area with a women's leadership training module, and our door-to-door enrollment drives resulted in 1,600 new students attending school in our target block – a 30 percent increase.

## Case Study

Kapil (aged 6) and Manoj (aged 10) are the children of lower caste laborers who currently migrate annually to Mewat, India for work in brick factories. "In our home village of Hathras, we do not own land and regular work is unavailable," their mother Devi tells us. "This forces us to come to Mewat for about nine months a year for work. Our family works 14-hour days at the brick factory. Together, the four of us make about 1,500 bricks and earn \$6 each day."

As an extension of our LEARN project, Lotus Outreach recently identified several hundred children like Kapil and Manoj who were spending their days molding and firing bricks instead of attending school. With a little encouragement, enrollment assistance and material support in the form of school fees, uniforms, books, shoes and backpacks, Lotus Outreach was able to successfully enroll the children in school for the first time in their lives; they now attend regularly. "We realize that due to no regular work our life is spoiled, but we are very happy that our children will be educated now and we hope they will not have to run around the country to find work when they grow up," says Devi. "Hopefully when they get older they can settle down with the respect and dignity that comes with education. They love school very much and keep asking us 'why can't we go to school on Sunday?'"





## 2009 At A Glance

- Admitted 274 victims, 66 relatives, and 107 vulnerable girls for therapeutic services
- Provided trauma counseling to 50 young victims of human trafficking and rape – at least four of whom were between the ages of five and eight years old
- Re-integrated 70 clients and 74 relatives to their home communities

*“It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.”*

*Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General*

# Consoling Through Counseling (CTC)

Helping victims of human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual abuse heal through professional trauma counseling and group therapy

In Cambodia, a woman is expendable. She is often held in lower regard than a man, considered to be a commodity and is unworthy of investment. As in many developing countries, economic oppression exacts a multifarious toll on the female, thus she will rarely be educated or prepared to enter the workforce. Poor, ignorant, and ostracized, she is locked in a dependence on her male counterpart, who may abuse drugs or alcohol to cope with his own poverty. Gender-based violence is rampant.

Widespread sex trafficking and rape present Cambodian women with a painful irony: in addition to the trauma of sexual assault and abuse, these crimes are commonly considered the victim's failure to protect her reputation. Ostracized and shouldering a burden of guilt for having shamed their families, many girls have no one to turn to. In the worst cases, a family may demand that an attacker marry the "tainted" daughter.

In a culture where a young woman can be forced to spend her life with her rapist, therapy for the sexually abused is a revolutionary concept. Through psychological support in a safe and nurturing shelter environment, women and girls can find a chance to reclaim their dignity, self worth and overall mental health.

Because younger patients have often had few opportunities outside the shelter to play or be vulnerable without opening themselves to abuse, the program provides a safe haven for girls to be girls. Creative therapies, including drawing, singing and dance, allow girls to shed the grown up lifestyles and to indulge in childhood, rebuilding confidence and tattered social skills.

Women receive counseling separate from their younger counterparts, who generally experience and process abuse differently. Therapy for adult patients is coupled with informal skills training, teaching women practical trades such as sewing, cooking, and small business operations.

## Case Study

Jorani (name has been changed) left her home at age 19, traumatized and pregnant. She didn't know whose child she was carrying because she had been repeatedly raped by both her father and older brother. Unable to defend herself from the very men who should have protected her, Jorani appealed to the village chief and police for help.

Bravely, Jorani filed a formal complaint against her own kin, which met with tragic consequences. Both men were arrested and detained, but her brother escaped and her father hung himself in prison. After a painful miscarriage that left her in need of medical attention, Jorani was referred to our shelter in Sisophon through our local partner, the Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC).

Physically drained, overwhelmed with guilt and a staggering burden of shame, Jorani kept to herself at the shelter. She rarely spoke and shied from others' attempts to interact with her. She felt alienated by the abuse she had suffered, believing her story was rare and isolated. Depressed at the thought of the stigma she would suffer in her society, Jorani assumed her future was destroyed. She suffered from violent nightmares, and remained listless and anxious during waking hours.

It took many hours of individual counseling to coax Jorani back into the social arena. Very gradually building a relationship with her counselors, she began to share her feelings of isolation and terror. As she gained confidence in them, and in herself, Jorani became more comfortable seeking support from her peers and joined in group therapy. Most recently, Jorani has cultivated a talent for making souvenir jewelry, and has enrolled in a sewing course at the shelter. Through these crafts, she has rediscovered a sense of self-worth and dignity, and now looks forward to the possibilities her new life has to offer.

*“The boss would tell me to go with a man,  
and I couldn’t refuse. We were beaten  
badly if we didn’t agree.”<sup>2</sup>*

*Survivor of sex trafficking*



# Safe Migration and Reduction of Trafficking (SMART)

Educating vulnerable migrant communities along the Thai-Cambodian border on how to protect themselves and their children from modern day slavery

Proximity to the Thai border, widespread poverty and a lack of social cohesion have created a perilous situation for the youth of Cambodia's western province, Banteay Meanchey. Thailand's prolific sex trade has rendered the province a hotspot for human trafficking, with children being particularly vulnerable. The Cambodian Minister of Women's Affairs estimated in 2005 that 30,000 children were involved in the Cambodian sex trade, and 81 percent of trafficked children assisted through the International Organization for Migration's reintegration program in Cambodia between 2000 and 2003 came from the Banteay Meanchey province.

Lotus Outreach believes that basic health, safety, education and equal rights are more than fundamental human rights – they are catalysts for eradicating poverty. Safe Migration and Reduction of Trafficking (SMART) is a mobile outreach project that seeks to ensure the safe migration of thousands of Cambodians who cross the border daily for work, with a focus on educating women and girls about the special risks they face. While working more broadly to stem the immediate tide of trafficking, the SMART program simultaneously funnels resources to those best positioned to make a sustainable impact – women.

The SMART vehicle and counter-trafficking team moves along the porous Thai border providing anti-trafficking presentations and materials, literacy classes, and referral services to at-risk migrant laborers and street children. The project potentially prevents tens of thousands of people in the Poipet region from falling into the grips of traffickers, and women and children engaged in exploitative labor and the sex trade are referred to our formal or non-formal education programs and other services. SMART is also able to greatly expand its reach by training migrant women and girls to become counter-trafficking "peer educators" themselves – local volunteers who warn people on both sides of the border about the dangers of human trafficking.

## 2009 At A Glance

- More than 1,400 people participated in awareness-raising events at five main border crossings
- Medical care was provided for 220 people working in the border areas
- An additional 123 peer educators were trained on a voluntary basis to amplify the knowledge of safe migration practices
- Documentary screenings on female education and human trafficking were attended by 1,000 people and SMART staff distributed 1,880 information kits
- Referred 92 at-risk and exploited migrants to skills training, medical care and scholarship support services



<sup>2</sup> The Polaris Project.

[www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org). accessed April 11, 2010

[http://www.polarisproject.org/component/option,com\\_frontpage/Itemid,1/](http://www.polarisproject.org/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/)

*“Children are particularly vulnerable: 1.5 million every year - approximately 4,000 children every day - die from illnesses caused by poor quality drinking water or inadequate hygiene practices.”<sup>3</sup>*



# Water Well Construction

Improving health, nutrition and security by providing safe, reliable water sources to villagers living in the drought-prone regions of rural Cambodia

Unclean water and poor sanitation are the leading causes of death among children in rural Cambodia. As a last resort in water-stressed areas, villagers use unsafe water from ponds and dams, proliferating water-borne illnesses and other health complications. Additionally, provincial Cambodians have little to no awareness about proper hygiene and basic health, aggravating the incidence of parasites and gastro-intestinal disorders.

During the six to eight-month dry season, rural Cambodians spend as much as \$30 per month for drinking water. In one of the world's poorest countries with a per capita income of \$540, this can be equivalent to an entire month's wages. To fill the financial gaps, children are removed from school to find work. They often cross the border into Thailand, exposed to the compound risks of trafficking, rape, abuse and exploitation.

To counter this pernicious trap, Lotus Outreach began building wells in the drought-prone northwest province of Banteay Meanchey. Since 2007, the wells have improved the quality of life for 5,500 people who now have safe, reliable access to water for drinking, bathing, and growing vegetables, which are a vital source of nutrition during the dry season. Furthermore, eliminating a three to nine kilometer walk for water translates into time to work or attend school for one family member.

Reliable water provides priceless physical, emotional and social benefits to the communities of Banteay Meanchey. With each new well opening, Lotus Outreach and our local partner hold public education sessions to teach villagers the importance of hand-washing and basic hygiene, and to encourage them to keep their children in school.

## 2009 At A Glance

- Constructed six new water wells across six rural villages which collectively house over 7,500 Cambodian men, women and children
- The wells were drilled to an average depth of 41 meters and currently produce over 20 liters of water every minute
- Our impact assessment found that the majority of well users are using the water to grow home gardens including lemongrass, chili and edible lilies
- Following the public education sessions on health and hygiene, the majority of respondents said they now boil water before drinking it and 50% reported that they now regularly wash their hands with detergent



<sup>3</sup> World Water Day: Over 1.5 Million children die due to illnesses caused by poor hygiene or lack of clean water. (March 19, 2010) Retrieved April 11, 2010 from <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/SaveChAlli/baec91735c34e45f99d1cfff4fff4bb5.htm>



*"If you capture the youth and change the way they think, you can change the future."*

*Soraya Salti*

# Buddha Smiles

Helping lower caste children of illiterate quarry laborers succeed in school through mentorship and tutoring

Stone quarries in southern India’s Tamil Nadu state draw unskilled laborers in search of work from across the region. Traveling great distances, migrants typically arrive with their families, or even entire communities, in tow. Impromptu settlements sprout up with little or no access to clean water, sanitation, or health services.

For the children of these families, education is an extraordinary challenge. Although primary schooling is provided for free, they quickly fall behind and frequently drop out. Lotus Outreach’s partner, Spirit in Life, has identified a root cause of their difficulties - stone quarry children typically have no adult at home to turn to for help. More often than not, parents are illiterate, and even less educated than their children.

Buddha Smiles, a network of local volunteer teachers, was developed to assist struggling primary school students with free after-school tutoring. For less than \$15 per student per year, the program not only reinforces formal teaching of basic literacy and mathematics, but also seeks to imbue the program’s 228 children with broader concepts such as critical thinking, conflict-resolution, and human rights.

This inexpensive, nimble program generates a rewarding bond for the children and mentors alike, who are able to pass an appreciation of education on to a population that most stands to benefit from it. Pushing back against class discrimination, Buddha Smiles prepares these disadvantaged children to compete educationally with those from more privileged sectors.

## 2009 At A Glance

- Two hours a day, five and six days a week, 228 children participated in extra classes and tutoring across ten learning centers in regions where average illiteracy rates exceed 80%
- Dedicated Buddha Smiles volunteers helped 59 children advance from primary to secondary school
- Despite being unable to enroll or attend formal school, 61 out-of-school children came out to learn at Buddha Smiles afternoon classes



*“Educate a boy and you educate an individual. Educate a girl, and you educate an entire village.” African proverb*

#### 2009 At A Glance

- Over 90% of GATE scholars successfully completed their year-end exams and advanced to the next grade level
- Twenty-six GATE scholars placed first in their class, with over 36% of program participants ranking among the top ten performing students in their class
- Orientation workshops throughout the year in three areas were attended by 2,442 students, parents and teachers to reinforce the structure and goals of the program
- Provided 57 destitute families with monthly rice support, freeing their daughters to attend classes rather than work to help feed their siblings

# Girls' Access to Education (GATE)

Keeping vulnerable and exploited rural Cambodia girls in public school through the provision of basic scholarship packages

When a Cambodian family is in need of income, female children are nearly always the first withdrawn from school to find work. Yet there is a strong correlation between a woman's education level and her children's overall well-being – women reinvest up to 90 percent of their incomes in their families, compared to 40 percent for men! Lotus Outreach believes withdrawing girls from school is a grave error with far-reaching consequences, and Girls' Access to Education (GATE) is our effort to remedy it.

GATE provides scholarships to over 600 girls who are at-risk or survivors of violence in Phnom Penh, Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap. Covering materials, uniforms, transportation, and rice support and lodging when necessary, the program strives to keep these individuals in attendance through high school to foster strong, capable young women – the mothers of tomorrow.

While girls offer the greatest potential return in terms of disseminating the benefits of their learning, culturally ingrained discrimination cripples this tendency by ensuring that they are also the most likely to be excluded from formal schooling. GATE represents a concerted effort to showcase a woman's value to her society by advancing what is now widely considered to be the Trojan horse in the war on poverty: girls' education.



## Case Study

Rina entered GATE in 2007 and quickly established herself as a bright and remarkable young woman. Her vibrant spirit took in Project Manager Raksmei Var, who hoped to help Rina achieve her dream of becoming a medical doctor. She was so inspired by Rina's drive and aptitude that she offered her a place to stay with her family in Phnom Penh if she is accepted into a medical program at the university.

These plans were put on hold when Rina's widowed mother could no longer afford to put food on the table and keep her three younger daughters in school, despite seasonal work as a farm laborer and selling rice cakes. For want of one dollar a day in school fees, Rina felt obligated to drop out to find work so that her sisters could continue to study.

Although she'd learned through GATE about the greatly elevated risk of trafficking for those who work abroad, a radio ad announcing too-good-to-be-true jobs in Korea seemed to be Rina's only option. She was set to leave when GATE program staff intervened – not only with graphic warnings of the horrors that could easily befall her – but with rice support for her family so she could stay in school. Rina was so relieved to be rescued that she cried in gratitude.

One of the lone pieces of furniture in Rina's humble, one-room home is a small bookshelf lined with tattered textbooks that bear witness to her mother's dream of a proper education for her daughters. Now with a safe, stable ration of rice for the year, Rina and her family no longer begin and end each day with empty bellies and hunger pangs. The assured source of basic sustenance enables the four daughters to focus on their lessons, bringing their mother's greatest wish to fruition.

# Our Approach

## Grassroots Collaboration

Our unique approach to tackling poverty and its tragic consequences involves working with grassroots organizations in our target countries (India and Cambodia) which possess the deepest understanding of their communities' needs and challenges. And while we believe that change spreads fastest from the ground up, we are also aware that grassroots organizations in the developing world are confronted by a unique set of challenges including lack of money, infrastructure, accountability measures, and performance management techniques. Lotus Outreach is thus working to empower our local partners by providing critical, on-the-ground support in the areas of funding, program design, performance management, technical support, training, and data collection and analysis, while giving them enough autonomy to ensure the local ownership and cultural relevance of each project.



# Our Beneficiaries

## Children

Children are the most vulnerable members of our global community, and it has been demonstrated that working with them provides the greatest long-term, sustainable benefits to communities in need. Poverty is nearly always transmitted from one generation to the next – a devastating cycle that must be broken. Children who are afflicted by poverty are substantially more likely to grow into adults who lack the education, resources and empowerment to give their children more hopeful futures. Consequently, Lotus Outreach operates on UNICEF’s principle that “investments in children are the best guarantee for achieving equitable and sustainable human development.”



## Women

The connection between empowering women and improving the lives of children is now widely recognized by the international community. As stated in UNICEF’s 2007 State of the World’s Children report, “healthy, educated and empowered women have healthy, educated and confident daughters and sons.” With this important connection in mind, Lotus Outreach also specifically targets girls and young women in order to achieve this “double dividend” of social change.



## Vulnerable Communities

Lotus Outreach programs also target children in communities that are among the poorest and most vulnerable – those most in need of assistance. Lotus Outreach programs are deployed in regions where both the needs are most pressing and where the organization has the ability to operate effectively. Though there are several large, highly effective NGOs and non-profits operating in Asia today, Lotus Outreach is unique in that it works to ‘fill the gaps’ that larger organizations leave behind. Lotus Outreach specifically targets underserved populations in isolated regions in order to ensure that it does not duplicate efforts already underway while reaching the people most in need, such as the rural poor.



## Local Partners

Recognizing that change spreads fastest from the ground up, our projects are delivered at the grassroots level by local people. Lotus Outreach carefully selects smaller partners who have demonstrated a capacity to do excellent work and could benefit from both financial assistance and program development. In addition to keeping its programs culturally relevant, this model also allows Lotus Outreach to have a much greater impact, for less. Lotus Outreach follows the principle of ‘a hand-up, not a hand-out’ (change not charity) and aims to build local capacity in the areas it serves.



**Lotus Outreach seeks to empower both its partners and beneficiaries to become self-sufficient. Lotus Outreach has, at its core, a simple value and principle – to enable local resources to flourish so people can meet their own needs. We only seek to change the inequity between those who can manifest their own solutions and those who cannot.**

## Our Local Partners



### Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC)

CWCC is a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) registered with the Royal Cambodian Government's Ministry of Interior. Its primary purpose is to provide assistance to women and children who are victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and trafficking. Its mission is to eliminate all forms of violence against women and work toward creating a society founded on equality, peace and development that will achieve happiness for all.



### Khemara

Khemara was the first Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) for women established in Cambodia. It was founded by Mu Sochua, the former Minister of Women's and Veterans' Affairs. Khemara delivers Non-Formal Education for sex workers and impoverished youth at risk of entering the commercial sex industry. Classes are taught by Ministry of Education-trained teachers and cover a wide range of subjects including numeracy, literacy, life skills, income generation and bill paying, how to avoid credit schemes, embroidery, sewing, gardening, HIV prevention and sanitation.



### Cambodian Organization for Children and Development (COCD)

COCD is a local Non-Government Organization (NGO) registered with the Royal Cambodian Government's Ministry of Interior. Its vision is to see a society where all people have quality welfare and where all children are free from all forms of abuse and are protected, educated, cared for and have their rights respected. COCD's mission is to improve the social welfare of vulnerable children, their families and communities through the implementation of integrated development and empowerment projects.



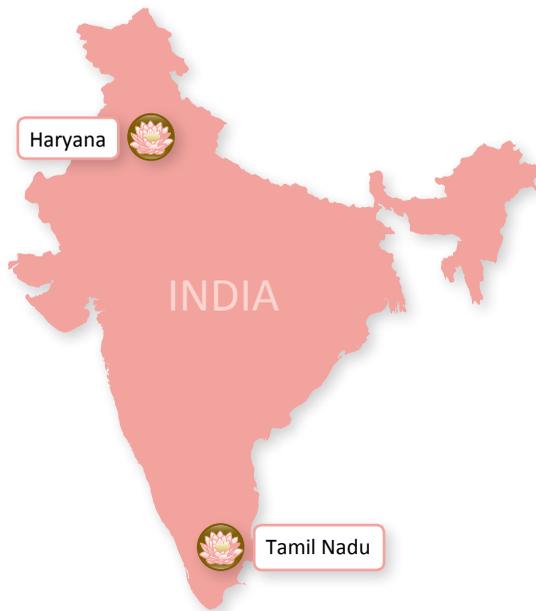
### White Lotus Charitable Trust

Founded by Khyentse Norbu in 1993, White Lotus works with socio-economically weaker sections of society with special emphasis on women and children – irrespective of caste, creed, culture and religion – toward the sustainable socio-economic development of individuals, the family and the community through various interventions to raise the standard and quality of their lives.

### Spirit in Life Movement

Founded by Indian University Professor and deeply engaged social worker Dr. Manivannan, Spirit in Life is a humble grassroots initiative that aims to build a peaceful, nonviolent and just world. Buddha Smiles is a project of the Spirit in Life Movement, a registered Public Charitable and Educational Trust in India. Buddha Smiles is a secular initiative that draws its inspiration from Gandhian philosophy of Sarvodaya (Welfare of All) which recognizes that moral, cultural, social, economic and political dimensions are all necessary components of holistic development.

## Where We Work



# 2009 In Review: Financial Snapshots

## Balance Sheet

### Assets

Cash	
Wells Fargo	3,096.33
Schwab Cash	2.08
Total Cash	3,098.41
Mutual Funds: Schwab SWVXX	229,781.32
PayPal	22,713.33
Total Other Short Term Assets	255,593.06
Pledges Receivable	2,850.00
Undeposited Funds	12,277.70
Total Current Assets	270,720.76
Assets Held For Sale	6,000.00
Total Assets	276,720.76

## Fund Balances Years' End 2008 - 2009

### Fund Balances Dec. 31, 2009

Cash	
Checking	3,098.41
Short-Term Investments	252,494.65
Total Cash & ST Investments	255,593.06
Pledges Receivable	2,850.00
Undeposited Funds	12,277.70
Total Cash & ST Investments	270,720.76
Assets Held for Resale	6,000.00
Total Assets	276,720.76

### Liabilities

Accounts Payable	7,553.00
Total Liabilities	7,553.00
Retained Surplus	
Restricted	0.00
Unrestricted	160,643.06
2009 Net Surplus	108,524.70
Retained Surplus Dec. 31, 2009	269,167.76
Total Surplus & Liabilities 2009	276,720.76

## Liabilities & Fund Balances

### Liabilities

Accounts Payable	7,553.00
Total Liabilities	7,553.00

### Retained Surplus

Restricted	0.00
Unrestricted (Retained Earnings)	160,643.06
Surplus 2009 (Net Income)	108,524.70
Total Retained Surplus	269,167.76
Total Surplus & Liabilities	276,720.76

## Change in Fund Balances from Dec. 31, 2008

Retained Surplus Dec. 31, 2008	160,643.00
Liabilities Dec. 31, 2008	2,708.00
Total Surplus & Liabilities 2008	163,351.06
Increase Surplus & Liab. 2009	113,369.70
Total Surplus & Liabilities 2009	276,720.76

Statement of Activities  
Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2009

**Revenue**

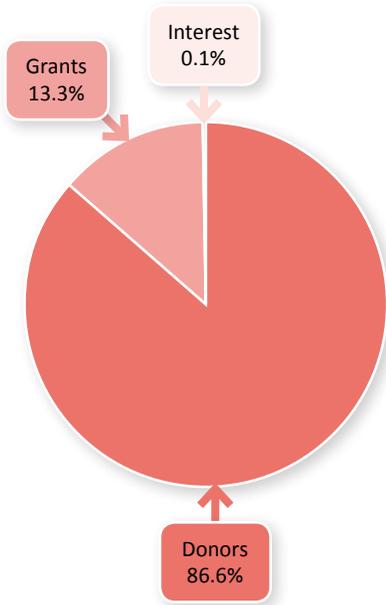
Contributed Support	356,817.74
Grants	54,711.00
Interest	269.56
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>411,798.30</b>

**Expenditures**

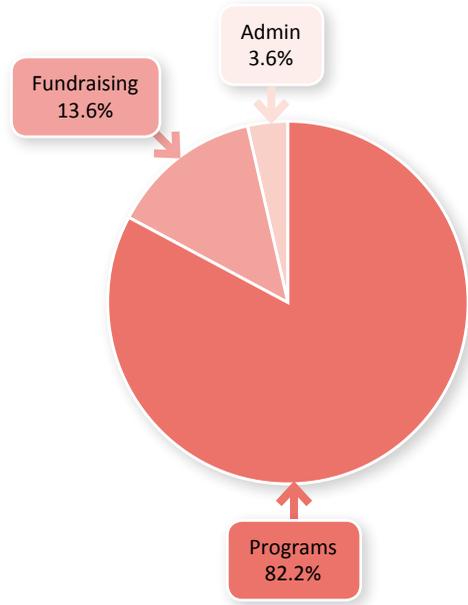
Programs	186,049.66
Program Expenses	64,939.42
Administration	10,971.08
Fundraising	41,313.44
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>303,273.60</b>

Surplus / Deficit 108,524.70

2009 Revenue by Source



2009 Expenses by Category



# Principles & Practices

## Principles and Practices of Financial Management

Lotus Outreach has adopted and adheres to the most current practices of financial and performance accountability. We want every stakeholder to rest assured in the transparent presentation of our fund management. The following are some of the most important principles we practice:

- Lotus Outreach operates in accordance with an annual budget that has been approved by the Board of Directors prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.
- Lotus Outreach maintains financial reports on a timely basis, accurately reflecting the financial activity of the organization, including the comparison of actual to budgeted revenue and expense.
- Lotus Outreach subjects its financial reports to review annually.
- Quarterly financial statements are provided to the Board of Directors. The statements explain any significant variation between actual and budgeted revenues and expenses.
- Lotus Outreach has written financial policies.
- Lotus Outreach may budget for a deficit from time to time but does not incur persistent or increasing operating deficits.

## Charitable Donations and Giving Guidelines

Lotus Outreach follows all laws, rules and regulations concerning charitable giving and receiving. We believe it is important to conduct our giving and receiving with as much transparency and accountability as possible. We want to assure every donor that each dollar is collected and distributed in a manner compliant with pertinent U.S. and international law.

### Charitable Donations and Contributions to Lotus Outreach

- Lotus Outreach will accept only unrestricted contributions and contributions for projects approved in advance by Lotus Outreach. While Lotus Outreach welcomes suggestions from donors about our use of funds, donor suggestions are not binding on Lotus Outreach. In all cases, Lotus Outreach will, as required by law, retain full discretion and control over the use of contributed funds, including the right to withdraw approval of a previously approved project if necessary so as to insure that all contributions will be used or are being used to carry out Lotus Outreach's functions and purposes.
- Lotus Outreach cannot accept funds that have been earmarked or restricted by the donor for use by a particular foreign organization or person.

### Charitable Giving

- The Lotus Outreach Board of Directors reviews and approves all charitable giving abroad and retains full discretion and control to ensure that partners are using funds for the stated purpose.
- Foreign charitable partner agencies submit to regular financial and narrative reporting that assures Lotus Outreach funds are being spent on the stated purpose formally approved by the Board of Directors.

# Our Team

## Chairman of the Board

Khyentse Norbu

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## Our Supporters

We are immensely grateful to our individual donors, foundation and corporate funders, in-kind donors and volunteers for your support and partnership. You make the work of Lotus Outreach possible and your continued aid is invaluable as we further our mission and expand the reach and benefit of Lotus Outreach programs. Your generosity is a lifeline for the children we serve.

**There are many ways to support Lotus Outreach, including:**

- Visit [www.lotusoutreach.org](http://www.lotusoutreach.org) and click 'Donate Now'
- Gifts of stocks, bonds and other appreciated assets
- Enrolling Lotus Outreach in your employer's matching gifts program
- Honoring someone with a gift in their name
- Making a gift by bequest



**LOTUS OUTREACH**  
INTERNATIONAL

### Foundations

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Lotus Outreach is a secular, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the living conditions of vulnerable children and their communities through education and healthcare.

Lotus Outreach is a registered 501(c)(3) public charity  
EIN# 80-0013909.

P.O. Box 620222  
San Diego, CA 92162-0222  
United States of America

Tel/Fax: 888.831.9990  
International Callers: 760-290-7190  
Email: [info@lotusoutreach.org](mailto:info@lotusoutreach.org)  
[www.lotusoutreach.org](http://www.lotusoutreach.org)

