



Questionnaire Village Chief

Interviewer UAC: So

Interviewer UAC: Khan Ra

Interviewer: Pisey

Interviewed:

Mr. Bunteoun

Kouksrok's village chief

Contact number: 012 424 587

Questions:

Are you born in this area and how long have you been working here?

I have been Kouk Srok's village chief for almost 10 years. Originally, I am a citizen of Kandaek commune, Prasat Bakong District. I moved from my homeland to live in Kouk Srok in 1990 and started as a village vice chief from 2004 to 2007. Subsequently, I officially became village chief.

How many people live in this village and how has population developed in recent years?

Kouk Srok is one of the poorest communes in Siem Reap, with a rather stable population of 1301, of which 628 male, 673 female and with a total of 274 families.

Is UAC to your knowledge the only NGO here or are there others?

UAC is extremely visible in Kouk Srok village, and has been for three years now. I hear you are in the village regularly. We are all acutely aware of your mission and focus around water/sanitary, construction and renovation, education and agriculture. You are not the only NGO who was present here. Other NGO like... [A, B and C] ...used to be engaged in our village, particularly in the area of healthcare, however it seems that they have stopped existing or at least have stopped following up on their work here. They don't come any longer. NGOs are helpful, very helpful in fact to get things going, but can be inconsistent. With UAC, so far so good, I am genuinely impressed with your organization and for countless support for villagers such as Hing Yat's family and all the other families that we already helped. I would like to extend my most profound gratitude to UAC, its friends and its patrons.

You as village chief - do you have help from others? How do you organise village work? Is there a council with responsibility?

Yes, I do have some help. I carry the main responsibility but I do split the relevant work with my one coworker and some volunteers of the community. I communicate to the village via a commune council for village work. I typically welcome villagers' proposals concerning their problems and aspire to help to solve them.

How many primary schools are there in the village or not too far from Kouk Srok? How many secondary schools?

There is only one "Kouk Srok Primary school" for all students in Kouk Srok village. No secondary school or high school has been established here yet. If students finished primary school in Kouk Srok they can continue their study at Bakong Secondary School which is 3km from Kouk Srok using their own bicycle or motor bike. There are two secondary schools and one high school in Bakong village for students.

Do you think children attend school regularly? Do they have to help at home to help the family rather than go to school?

Students are attending school more regularly than before. Out of ten students, only one gives up school. This used to be three out of ten only 4-5 years ago. Teachers are more aware and have become more rigorous with respect to their responsibility expected from them by the school director. For example, they ask for parents' phone numbers which - in a joint effort between families and schools - makes it easier to monitor student attendance, or explain absence. UAC has been helpful here, by liaising teachers with parents, especially of what UAC identified as disadvantaged families and students at risk. NGOs such as UAC come to our primary school to teach students about gender equality and hygiene so students can learn more on top of the subject knowledge that they anyway learn in class.

What percentage of population cannot read or write on your best estimate? How is this with children? Bad or worse than with adults?

There is a clear cut difference by age: People under 40 years old can read well and people over 50 years old are generally illiterate. Nowadays, children have more opportunity to go to school than before. They can read, write and calculate by their own. At least they get an offer and opportunity to do so. In general, illiteracy rate is gradually decreasing, maybe by 0.5-1% of the total population per year (10 people).

What is the main challenge for students not to continue with school curriculum?

It is economics. As Kouk Srok is still the poorest community in Siem Reap, some students whose parents cannot afford their studies, lack school material/clothing, travelling and paying school fee. Moreover, there is this lack of school density around here (only one primary school) and no secondary school.

What should NGOs like UAC try and do to improve the situation in education?

I think NGOs play an important role for helping poor communities like Kouk Srok especially in the education sector. I see three ways of support: 1) Build an English school 2) Send English teacher to teach teachers and students after class (extracurricular activity, extra hours of school attendance) and 3) improve sanitary facilities, toilets, access to clean water so absence statistics due to illness improve further.

Do Kouk Srok citizens appreciate if they have a toilet? Do they prefer a toilet in the house or are they ok with a communal toilet to share with other families?

If I am not mistaken, thanks to you, every family in Kouk Srok has now in some way access to a toilet. Still, 70 percent have no toilets for using 'just' for themselves, they share with neighbours. It has definitely improved but is still work in progress. The poorest families cannot even afford any repair work (materials purchase), and that often poses a big problem.

Do families in Kouk Srok have enough water to use or do they depend on rainfall?

Most families in Kouk Srok have sufficient ground water but lack hygiene know-how. Still too many don't have access to water filtration to make clean water. As my suggestion, if your organization can provide even more material and, especially, knowledge how to access clean water for our community, we would appreciate it.

Can people do simple repair work? Do they have access to spare parts or do NGOs have to provide for ongoing service after the sanitary facility has been built?

People have in general more knowledge regarding self-help construction works compared to water. It is still a challenge for poor families who cannot afford spare parts. They then leave their broken house as is until they earn money to refix - or they do something which is unusual in our Buddhist culture: they ask for help from their neighbours.

How many people at the maximum share a home with each other?

30 percent of Kouk Srok villagers still share home with their parents even though they are married. This is as a result of lack of property like land. In my experience, at a maximum 6 to 7 peoples share a home and belong to all three generations.

Thank you one more time for making yourself available for UAC and its cause.

