

CSARO
Annual Review 2001

Director's Message

CSARO (Organizational Profile)

CSARO's Activities 2001

- *Urban Community Organizing*
- *Community Infrastructure Program*
- *Environment Hygiene Awareness Program*
- *Mobile Outreach Team*
- *Waste Pickers Development Program*
- *Solid Waste Management Program and The Waste Recycling Development Center*

A Day in the Life of a Waste Picker (The Story of Chan Sopheap)

Organisational Development and Staff Capacity Building

Income and Expenditure Statement

CSARO (Organizational Profile)

The Community Sanitation and Recycling Organization (CSARO) was established in 1997 by a group of development workers who examined the social and economic conditions of waste pickers and their families in Phnom Penh. Based on this work, CSARO launched its development programs to assist the urban poor to develop their own capacity for better environmental, social and economic conditions. The focus of activities has been on transforming slum areas into clean, safe and healthy places to live, and raising the social and economic status of waste pickers.

CSARO consistently strives to bring about tangible results in each of the programs that it has initiated. The organization believes that the people are not mere recipients of development projects, but are the best partners in planning and implementing development projects -- building the residents' capacity so they may be able to identify their own problems and develop their own solutions appropriate to conditions in their area. With this philosophy, CSARO subscribes to and practices participatory processes in all sectors of its work.

The staff of CSARO has gained experience and confidence to pursue development work in the fields of community organizing, community-based solid waste management, hygiene awareness education, community infrastructure and environment improvements. Most, if not all, of CSARO's development workers come from a grassroots background and thus have a genuine grasp of the problems poor people face.

CSARO's Board of Directors meets regularly and as required, reviews and guides the activities of the organization. The Program Director oversees program development, manages day-to-day affairs and ensures program outputs and quality. A management committee comprising all key staff assists the Director on policy matters and program coordination.

Since its establishment CSARO has worked closely, and developed partnership with a number of international and local NGOs, government agencies, and private individuals. Foremost in the list are: the Municipal Department of Public Works and NORAD (through InterConsult International – ICI), Asian Medical Doctors Association (AMDA), Irish Aid, Oxfam HK, Urban Poor Women's Development (UPWD), United Nation's Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS) Urban Sector Group (USG) and APSO (the Irish Volunteer Service). Advisors assigned by ICI and APSO have enabled CSARO to develop its managerial and programmatic capacity, technological knowledge, research and documentation skills.

This year CSARO became a member of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), an international environmental alliance with links to Green Peace and Waste Not Asia (WNA). In July, CSARO's Director, Heng Yon Kora was invited to address WNA annual meeting in Taiwan. At the same time, CSARO also joined the Basel Action Network (BAN) an international network dedicated to stopping the export of toxic waste from industrialized to developing countries. This marks CSARO's entrance into the regional and global environmental movement and creates important networking possibilities for the organization.

Overview: CSARO in 2001

In 2001, CSARO's development initiatives expanded into more communities and households within its pilot zone, located in Chamcarmon district of Phnom Penh City. Outreach and awareness programs reach beyond the pilot zone to thousands of waste pickers and the general public across the city.

During this period the three major programs (Community Organizing and Infrastructure; Environmental Hygiene Awareness; and the Waste Picker Development Center) registered notable increases in activities and beneficiaries, while two sub-components, the Mobile Outreach Team and Solid Waste Management developed sufficiently to become "stand-alone" programs.

Thanks to their own efforts with CSARO's assistance and support, low-income neighbourhoods benefited from newly constructed sewers and drains; families enjoyed potable water from newly installed

connections to the city water supply; fillings projects eliminated mosquito breeding grounds, paving and grading projects made badly damaged roads and alleyways passable. On the social side, messages on hygiene and sanitation enriched young minds and helped to break old habits in schools and communities. Waste pickers also made major gains with the start of the new community-based waste collection pilot project. Child waste pickers learned new literacy and numeracy skills in dozens of "curbside classrooms".

The succeeding pages shall narrate the quantitative and qualitative impact of the organization's activities conducted last year, and highlight the efforts of CSARO's development workers, community leaders, waste pickers, self-help group members and other program partners.

Community Organizing

CSARO utilizes participatory methods to assist residents to identify community issues and problems. In low-income areas, the organization's immediate aim is to establish community development committees (CDCs) composed of community leaders and responsible residents. These CDCs discuss solutions, build consensus among residents and undertake small-scale infrastructure projects in their areas.

This year, CSARO assisted residents to establish four new CDCs in the pilot zone, bringing the total to 24. Members adopted specific names for their respective CDCs', (e.g., "Santepheap", meaning "Peace" is located down the alley between streets 310/320). These new groups are given orientation on an urban community development process, training in project planning and negotiating skills and assisted to identify the needs of their communities. The new CDCs cover some 79 households with a total of 454 residents.

All CDCs participated in ten monthly-meetings during 2001 with average attendance of about 77 members. Various topics are discussed, e.g., identification of issues and projects, community profiling, work planning and budgeting; how to set-up savings schemes, how to improve CDC's relationship with local authorities; and project documentation. Election of CDC officers and representatives were also held.

17 members from new CDCs participated in a workshop on Community Development Principals to build-up their skills. Two community-exchange visits were also held for 46 CDC members to learn about recycling and a successful sewer project. Participants exchanged notes on organizing community projects and how to build better cooperation with local officials.

During this period, two CDC set-up saving schemes. Residents are encouraged to save small sum every week. The funds are used for small community projects and up-keep of community infrastructure.

CSARO also build-up relationships with the School Development Committees from 6 schools located within the pilot zone and assisted them to undertake 12 projects to improve sanitation for students and staff.

Community Infrastructure

The CDCs mobilized residents to participate in projects that address the community-identified problems. In 2001, 31 small-scale infrastructure projects were planned and undertaken benefiting more than 4,426 residents. Additional projects with 6 local schools benefited some 16,479 students.

14 new sewer-drainage systems were installed in communities in Sangkats (wards) Boeung Keng Kang 2 and 3. A total of 2,050 meters of sewers of varied sizes (0.30m, 0.40m and 0.50m) were installed to directly benefit 2,279 residents by reducing flooding and improving sanitation. Chey Chum Neas community undertook the single largest project for the year during August and September. A total of 641 meters of 0.50m sewer mains with 35 clean-out boxes were installed. The community is composed of 72

households with 399 people. This project has helped to eliminate the frequent flooding by sewage in the area.

Six paving projects were completed by CDCs to improve some 1,764 square meters of alleyways benefiting 832 residents with better access and sanitation, while four community road maintenance activities improved about 1,782 meters of neighbourhood roads, directly benefiting about 1,648 residents.

Residents in 7 communities undertook water supply projects and now enjoy access to potable water at affordable prices thanks to new water distribution systems connected to the city water supply. These projects benefited 800 residents.

Four waste storage buildings measuring 2 meters by 3 meters, two latrine blocks and two water wells were completed in local schools, greatly enhancing sanitation for students and staff.

As part of its community support activities focusing on sanitation problems, CSARO distributed waste collection tools and handcarts to two schools and two Sangkats in the pilot zone. These tools will benefit many thousands of students and local residents with improved sanitation.

For these small-scale infrastructure projects, CSARO assumed an average of 38% of the total cost while the CDCs mobilized community participation of 62% including the beneficiaries' labor.

6 other projects were being developed by CDCs at the close of the year.

Hygiene Awareness Program

This program mobilized teacher and community volunteers to provide hygiene awareness training to students in schools within the "Neighbourhood Improvement Programme (NIP)" pilot zone and to residents in low-income communities. Waste pickers are also targeted through CSARO's non-formal education program. Public campaigns are organized to bring the message to the general public within the pilot zone.

In all there were six public hygiene awareness campaigns initiated by CSARO during 2001 with some 814 participants. Most notable of these was the "Community Hygiene Awareness Day" held on March 20. Over 300 volunteers took turns cleaning-up the drainage canal that runs through the pilot zone. Each participant was given a t-shirt and a cap bearing the Khmer slogan "participate for a cleaner environment".

On March 8th CSARO participated in activities to mark International Women's Day by setting-up a booth at the NGO exhibition area and distributing information to the public on CSARO activities and urban environmental issues. On June 3rd, World Environment Day, CSARO organized a mass activity involving more than 400 volunteers – students, waste pickers, residents, and some municipal environment officers. Participants marched through community streets and called for the cleaning up of canals, road trash and household garbage. Equipped with sacks and rakes, volunteers picked up litter along the streets.

In connection with these activities, CSARO put up a total of 8 signboards/billboards and 20 banners with environmental and hygiene messages in strategic spots of the pilot zone. More than 4,700 aprons, gloves and towels with the campaign logo were also distributed to participants.

As part of its program on environment and hygiene, CSARO continued to hold awareness sessions in six schools within the pilot zone and in selected communities. The year-long series includes lively and highly participatory sessions on hygiene and sanitation education focused on clean water, dangers to good health and garbage disposal and the environment. Using a variety of teaching techniques including role-play, storyboards, group discussion, art and songs, a total of 242 sessions were conducted with 4,323 students. In the communities, local volunteers provided 224 sessions attend by more than 5,000 residents.

In one of the most popular approaches, participants sing along with 12 karaoke songs on hygiene themes that CSARO has produced. Also popular with young people are role-plays and documentary videos prepared by CSARO.

CSARO has developed a number of IEC (information, education and communication) materials for use in the campaigns and awareness sessions. These include videos, posters, Calendars, leaflets, storybooks, songbooks, caps, t-shirts, banners, signboards and other teaching aids. All materials have been designed and tested to be appropriate for urban situations. CSARO distributed more than 19,000 pieces of IEC materials during 2001.

Mobile Outreach Team

CSARO established a Mobile Outreach Team as a subcomponent of the Hygiene Awareness program to keep in contact with waste pickers (children and adults) who work on the streets. The team provides on-street first-aid assistance, interacts with waste pickers through games, conduct non-formal learning sessions for literacy and numeracy skills, and gives them advice on hygiene, sanitation and drug prevention.

Working in three districts of Phnom Penh, the Mobile Outreach Team has established 13 regular meeting points -- nine points in the daytime and four in early evenings, where they set-up their temporary "curbside classrooms". Without walls or blackboards, team members engaged the waste pickers with lively lessons on health and personal hygiene, social skills, good manners, food hygiene, child rights, the dangers of sniffing glue and other subjects. In these lessons, various teaching techniques were applied such as role-plays, learning games and quizzes. In all, 381 sessions were held with an average of 20-40 participants. 2,700 pieces of education materials were distributed to the participants.

First-aid services were provided to 1,975 waste pickers with almost 66% percent being children. Fever and surface wounds were the most common illnesses. Ten waste pickers were referred to the AMDA clinic or local hospitals for the more serious problems.

To help educate and broaden each waste picker's experience and knowledge, four exposure trips were organized for 150 waste pickers from the Mobil Team program. They visited the Kirirom mountain forest in Kompong Speu province and Tamao Zoo in the province of Takeo. CSARO also encouraged child waste pickers to participate in mass mobilization for hygiene and sanitation campaigns, such as the activity on June 1st International Children's Rights Day.

As part of its effort to provide non-formal education to both adult and child waste pickers, CSARO designed 12 NFE session plans with 12 session handouts and 20 picture materials. CSARO also facilitated the reintegration of a number of child waste pickers into the formal school system.

Waste Picker Development Program

This program aims to assist waste pickers to develop socially and economically. To this end, CSARO facilitates the creation of waste picker self-help groups (SHGs), and provides literacy and skill training for adults. Child waste pickers are provided non-formal education and various activities for social development. CSARO's Waste Picker Development Center located in the grounds of the Toul Sleng Primary School serves as the main venue for these activities.

In 2001, the center attracted an average of 40 to 60 waste pickers per day. Five mornings a week non-formal education sessions are held for children. Adult classes are held in the afternoon. The focus is on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills, combined with lessons on HIV/Aids, Child rights, nutrition,

hygiene, diarrhea, drug abuse and proper garbage disposal. To maintain and reinforce reading skills, waste pickers have access to reading materials such as local newspapers, magazines and storybooks from the center's library. Waste pickers also have access to selected TV programs, learning toys are available for younger kids.

As part of their social development, the SHGs organized three exposure trips to Kompong Som and Kirirom National Park with 157 SHG members and relations participating. These trips helped to increase understanding of the natural environment. Their capacity for team working and social interaction was also greatly enhanced.

First-aid services were provided to 387 waste pickers during 2001, with child recipients outnumbered adults by more than 10 to 1. Most common problems were cuts and wounds as a result of scavenging activities, followed by fevers. Seven patients were referred to the AMDA clinic or local hospitals for treatment of more serious illnesses.

During 2001, CSARO staff facilitated the creation of a new self-help group. Named "Moonlight" in Khmer, the SHG has 10 members. A youth club with 12 members called "Good Youth", was also organized during this period to provide a positive social development experience for these vulnerable young people. This brings the total number of waste picker groups formed since the beginning of the program to six. The new SHG members underwent program orientation and elected their respective officers and representatives.

17 workshops were conducted in 2001 to train adult waste pickers on recycling and composting skills. A total of 145 trainees underwent practical lessons on waste composting and on recycling of tires into flowerpots, papermaking and transforming plastic bags and bottles into useful objects. Each workshop included at least 40 hours of instruction.

SHGs held regular monthly meetings where various topics were discussed including: setting goals and objective, roles of group members, recycling and composting and waste collection activities. An average of 25 members attends the meetings that have helped build solidarity and coordination among waste pickers. This has been a very important development because traditionally society looks down upon the waste pickers and individuals have been quite isolated and vulnerable.

Solid Waste Management Program and the Waste Picker Development Center

CSARO's "community waste management concept" gave rise to this program that employs waste pickers as the primary collectors of solid wastes from residents within a pilot zone. Using pushcarts designed and supplied by the program, members of the SHGs collect waste from approximately 2,300 homes and small businesses in parts of Boueng Keng Kang 2 and 3.

CSARO completed construction of a Waste Recycling Development Center (WRDC) located in the grounds of the Preah Ang Eng Primary School in January 2001. SHG members started processing waste at the WRDC on the first of February. Every morning the sixteen collectors go door to door to pick-up garbage and deliver it to the center where another team sorts the waste to remove organic and recyclable materials. Recyclable materials are stacked and bundled for sale to local buyers. The food and vegetable wastes are fed into a locally fabricated shredder of CSARO's design. The shredded material is then stacked in bins with aeration tubes for 3-4 months. When the waste is fully decomposed, it is fed into another machine to sort it by partial size. CSARO is helping the group develop several markets for their products. In all, 22 waste pickers are currently involved in the Solid Waste Management Pilot Program.

Compost production was temporarily suspended in April because of technical difficulties that resulted in foul odor from the compost bins. Improvements were made such as putting the new shredder machine into service, paving the work area, and installing rain covers and drains. The situation improved greatly after this work was completed and compost production was restarted in May.

With waste collection averaging 26 cubic meters (about 9 tons) per day, the total for the year was more than 8782 cubic meters (3100 tons). Of this, 227 cubic meters (16 tons) of recyclable materials (paper, plastic, metal, etc..) were removed for sale to local buyers, and approximately 290 cubic meters (101 tons) of food and plant waste were collected for composting. Total compost production for the year was 3.5 tons.

The remaining waste is loaded into trucks of the Cleaning Authority of Phnom Penh (CAP) which is collaborating with CSARO on the pilot project, for transport and disposal at the dumpsite. CAP also collects the monthly service fees from residents, which they use to pay the SHGs for the waste collection service and cover operating costs of their vehicle.

In addition to their salaries for waste collection, SHGs were able to save \$537.66 from the sale of compost and recyclable materials. Part of this amount they keep as a reserve fund for maintenance of the center and equipment. Increasingly the SHG members are assuming responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the WRDC. The groups also run a small credit scheme with their savings fund.

This program has resulted in better service to residents and better sanitation within the area. A survey of area residents carried out by CSARO in April found that more than 97% were happy with the service and wanted the pilot program to continue. Other benefits include a reduction in waste being sent to the already overcrowded dumpsite, less damage to neighborhood roads by heavy garbage trucks, reduced operating costs and job creation. The SHG members report that the steady income from garbage collection has helped to stabilize their families' conditions while the credit scheme has helped them cover special needs like school fees and purchase of new bicycles.

A Day in the Life of a Waste Picker (The Story of Chan Sopheap)

The bright yellow-and-blue uniform that Chan Sopheap and her co-workers wore on that sun-filled morning would readily remind you of those beer and cigarette promotion girls who circulate in the city's restaurants offering customers samples of their goods. For these two group of working women, the similarity ends in colored outfits.

Chan Sopheap and the other men and women in the self-help groups do have a product to sell, "compost" produced from the cities garbage! Waste pickers all, they also promote a cause that goes with their goods – a cause that the city continues to hear about: a healthy, clean and sanitary urban environment.

Without fancy clothes or make-up, only a dust mask pulled down over her lips, Sopheap and her easy smile allowed us a glimpse into her difficult life. She wouldn't let the clattering noise of the shredding machine drown out her voice and her story, as she nonchalantly sifts through the shredded waste with her gloved hands. The lead woman of her group, she is responsible for sorting the piles of garbage that passes through the waste recycling center and processing them into compost.

Sopheap is married and has four children. To augment her husband's meager earnings from fishing she went into waste picking by the time her second child was born. She would search the streets, oftentimes with her baby sleeping in the pushcart among the cardboard and plastic bottles. Her toil regularly took her as far as fourteen kilometers from her house in search of scrap materials that she could sell to a middleman. Then she would rush back home to sell whatever catch her fisherman husband made. Rain or shine, she'd scavenge, confronted daily with peoples' prejudice against waste pickers... some would drive her away when she and her child would plead for shelter from the rain. It was always her pushcart that served as her baby's cradle.

"One day," she narrates rather excitedly, "while my son and I were scavenging through a pile of street garbage, a man approached me and asked me how much I make from waste picking and if I want to send my son to school. I said, yes. He then accompanied me to the waste picker development center of

CSARO where scavengers are offered a place to rest and bathe and children can have lessons. From then on, I came in regularly”.

She would later learn the principles, practice, and waste management concept of CSARO. Much later, she found herself amazingly travelling with other waste pickers on an exposure trip to Thailand, Vietnam and Bangladesh to observe waste picker groups from those countries and how they organized work and learnt the rudiments of waste management, recycling and compost production.

“I know that now I have a real skill. Aside from farming, I know that I could teach people to do recycling and composting of waste materials. As I put into practice proper garbage disposal that I learned from CSARO, I know that the people can learn and practice the same thing too”, she explains as her bright eyes occasionally glance at the recycled tires she and her co-workers formed and painted to be the flower pots.

“Because my deputy is absent today, I have to rush to Boeung Keng Kang 2 and 3 and see if household waste collection has been done properly – or else the residents will blame us.” Sopheap hurriedly finished her sentence as she rode off on her bicycle to rattle along the dusty, unpaved road that typifies small neighbourhoods in Phnom Penh.

One unpaved road... one of the many streets that witnessed Sopheap’s charcoaled scavenging days. The many streets that paved her way to become a waste processor – and a brightly dressed CSARO advocate that she is now.

Organisational Development and Staff Capacity Building

As part of its commitment to human resource development, CSARO conducted a number of trainings for skills development and workshops for staff and personnel.

For general skills, three officers completed a 45-hour course in English language from a local private school. Three staff completed a “Training of Trainers” instruction provided by Catholic Relief Services and SILIKA Organization. And one additional staff member completed a General Management course also by SILIKA.

For specialised training, ten staff members underwent training for “Developing Work Plans, Methods and Materials for Non-Formal Education” provided by training expert Mr. S. Alexander from Southern India. Two staff completed a 24-hour hands-on training on “Basic Digital Video Editing” using an available video studio editing software program under Mr. C. Perpeña from the Philippines. CSARO’s staff also joined with SHG members and community leaders for a 2-day workshop on “Methodology of Record-keeping for Grass-roots Organizations”.

To have a fresh look at programs and get objective feedback, CSARO commissioned an external evaluation of its programs in October 2001. The mission report was positive in tone and provided a number of constructive suggestions for program improvements and future directions. Based on this report and its own internal review, CSARO undertook preparation of a new three-year development plan in December 2001 to cover the period from March 2002. The resulting plan will be distributed to perspective donors in early 2002.

Income and Expenditure Statement (?)