

EDITORIAL



FOCUS

My mission in Cambodia

By Jacqueline Délia-Brémond

Travelling. Meeting people who on the spot, give concrete expression to our action, and discovering teams who may propose new projects. This is an essential step, which is at the very heart of our foundation's mission.

Of course, a short term mission does not allow us to grasp all country visited issues. More over, during his time, it is difficult to go deeper in each project's component.

And above all, the project paper document becomes reality. Moments shared with local teams, meeting with people who will live the effects of the project on their daily life; are precious moments for Foundation's members and myself- when I get the chance to live them-

I would like to share with you some « snapshots ».

J. Délia-Brémond.

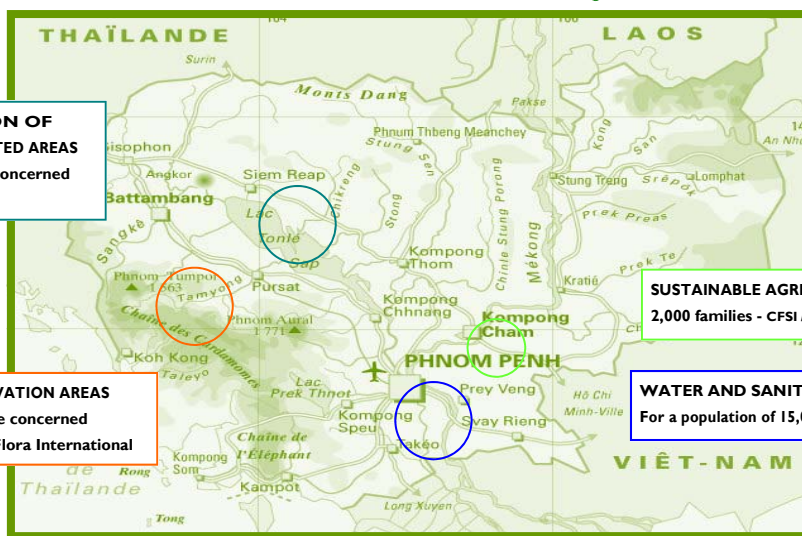
Vice-chairman, Fondation Ensemble

**CREATION OF
30 PROTECTED AREAS**
64 villages concerned
Birdlife

33 CONSERVATION AREAS
3,000 people concerned
Fauna and Flora International

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
2,000 families - CFSI / CEDAC

WATER AND SANITATION
For a population of 15,000 - GRET



16 December, 2006. The rainy season stopped last month. The temperature in the streets of Phnom Penh is almost 30°C. 13.8 million Cambodians are preparing to experience the dry season, which, like every year, will last till April. There are children in the streets. Lots of children. One Cambodian in 2 is under 20! But more than half of these children, aged under 5, suffer from malnutrition.

Abrupt landing in one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking-129th on the HDI (Human Development Index) scale. The country still bears the scars of the huge trauma of the Khmer Rouge period.

My mission starts in the region of Tonle Sap freshwater lake, the largest flood plain in the world! The lung of Cambodia. Here, the agro-food companies impose their law. They are not concerned neither by local populations' lot nor by

environment, specially regarding protection of certain endangered species. They have taken over more than half of this extremely fertile land for their own profit, leaving local farmers only the possibility of working as hired labour, six months a year.

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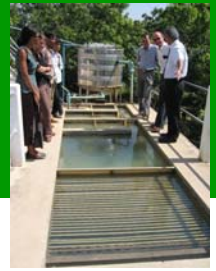
Bengal Floricans. One of the many endangered species in the Tonle Sap region.



The stock-rearing of catfish and frogs provides the major part of daily protein needs.



Pumped irrigation system.



Water treatment plant in operation at Smau Kney.

CAMBODIA SPECIAL

KEY FACTS

CAPITAL: Phnom Penh
 SURFACE AREAS: 181,035 KM²
 POPULATION: 13,881,427
 LIFE EXPECTANCY: 57.4
 PER CAPITA GDP: 278
 HDI RANK: 129
 RURAL POPULATION: 75%
 INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 97 ‰
 LITERACY RATE: 31,3%
 PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF FOREIGN CURRENCY: textiles and tourism.

Source: United Nations Development Programme

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The solution lies in the setting up of protected areas called IFBAs (Integrated Farming and Biodiversity Areas). With the cooperation of Birdlife, the Wildlife Conservation Society and a local organisation for the strengthening of capacity, Cedac, around thirty villages will be selected for the purpose: meetings with the villagers to provide them with instruction on the issues mentioned, marking the boundaries of the areas to be protected, etc.

These methods have already shown results. A few kilometres away, in Kampong Kolei, I am able to see the good results achieved by farmers who conducted an experiment on increasing the yield of their crops, particularly using the SRI (System of Rice Intensification) technique.

The remote region of the Cardamom Mountains has an exceptional degree of biological diversity and should be listed as a UNESCO world heritage site.

I have to leave our partners. My feelings are double: a certain amount of optimism tempered by the question of the official recognition, first provincial then national, of these IFBAs. The success of this programme depends on it. In any case, the farmers concerned will still have to assimilate sustainable, profitable agricultural practices.

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DEC

First contact in the heart of the Cardamoms, with the rangers

Flying over the Cardamom Mountains, covered in virgin forest, I discover an area that is one of the richest in the world in terms of animal and plant species: 329 species of mammal, birds (479), reptiles (484), amphibians (202), and 13,500 plant species, some of which are endemic. However, I also quickly discover the other side of the picture.

At Pramoay, in the North-West, the site of one of our projects, I meet the rangers. Their storehouse is full of chainsaws made in China, confiscated from smugglers to Thailand and Vietnam, who export exotic wood that is doubly precious for furniture making and for the manufacture of drugs such as ecstasy. In the field, I accompany a representative from Cedac, who shows me round, the facilities set up close by, for the development of sustainable agriculture.

Some families have tanks to collect rainwater, in which they breed frogs and catfish, their only source of animal protein. Elsewhere, there is an ecological chicken farm in an enclosed space, which makes use of natural phytotherapy products only.

The farmers have recently learnt how to group together to form a cooperative, which sets non-negotiable prices for foodstuffs. They are also learning to familiarise themselves with the local administrative authorities and how to work with them.

There are still visible traces of past traumas, but the locals are clearly confident in the future.

vast majority of local populations are still unaware about sanitation problems. They are fully absorbed in satisfying their basic needs.

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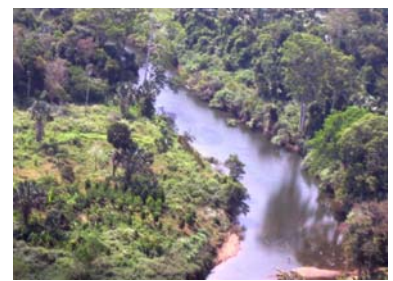
DEC

Visit to the Smau Kney water treatment plant

A change of scenery: today I am heading for the provinces of Kandal and Takéo, to the south of Phnom Penh. During the journey by minibus, I talk to Pierre Thévenot (GRET) about the extreme complexity of bureaucracy in Cambodia: water and sanitation concern 9 separate government ministries.

In the village of Smau Key, where the population has access to water, you only have to walk through the streets or along the alleys of the marketplace to realise that water without sanitation or waste management is a huge source of pollution. Sewage is poured onto the road and mixes with waste water. The drainage ditches are full of rubbish. A saddening sight!

Continued on page 3...





Meetings with our partners in the field.



Families reap the benefits of sustainable agriculture and production cooperatives.



Intensive Rice Culture : applications in Cambodia

Continued from page 2...

To raise the awareness of the population, GRET offers a demonstration on 3 pilot sites, and certain targeted operations. This will take time, but I gather from the local authorities that the teams in place will be able to count on their support. This is crucial.

A stone's throw away, I visit a small electricity production unit and the water treatment plant, both situated in proximity to a large reservoir of clean water. Everything seems to be working, which is encouraging.

In the afternoon, I have a meeting with Wild Aid. The goal of this NGO is to save the south western part of the Cardamom Mountains from deforestation in order to protect the large mammals still living there. The method they use is armed patrols of determined rangers, and the creation of financially assisted villages, to attract families of poachers, living in the forest and practising slash-and-burn farming. An idea, it's worth keeping an eye on.

OUR PARTNERS	
INVESTMENT IN CAMBODIA : €808,307	
FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL www.fauna-flora.org	GRET www.gret.org
CFSI www.cfsi.asso.fr	BIRDLIFE www.birdlife.org

In this underprivileged canton, land is at a premium, due to the population density, and the crops are meagre.

In Cambodia, most rural communities are dependent on the forest.

I meet the Director of Community Forestry International (CFI). This organisation assists rural communities through, a variety of small projects, to rationalise the use of natural resources.

Recent legislation encourages the protection of the forests, but here again the creation of protected community areas is indispensable.

21 DEC Last contacts with people on the spot...

The last few hours before take-off. I start a fascinating conversation with Yves Terracol (AFD). Our discussion highlights the benefits that could be drawn from possible synergies.

We are working in the same areas (Cardamoms) and sometimes on the same projects. I leave Cambodia with these common projects in mind. So many ideas to be built – together.

Rice is not an aquatic plant. This is the revolutionary idea that our partners are endeavouring to develop in Cambodia. No, rice does not grow better on land that is constantly waterlogged.

Focus on a technique that is full of promise for local populations and the environment, on condition that it can be adapted.

Across all the programmes supported by Fondation Ensemble in Cambodia, one finding stands out: thanks to intensive rice culture, yields have doubled on the majority of plots concerned (in the Cardamom region, for example, yields are as high as 5 tonnes of rice per hectare per annum, compared to a national average of 2 tonnes.)

Water consumption has also dropped considerably, starting from the demonstrated principle that rice grows better when it extracts oxygen directly from the air.

Lastly, the use of compost has reduced the need for seeds and chemical products. The production costs borne by the families are lower. The impact on the environment and the rewards in terms of health and economics are obvious.

However, these results have their limits: the reticence of the farmers towards transplanting manually (1 or 2 shoots per 25 cm square!), often unreliable access to water and biomasses, the burden of weeding, etc.

Herein resides the strength of the organisations with a strong local base, such as CEDAC, which works in cooperation with the CFSI. Their teams succeed in involving the local populations from the earliest stages of the process, and devote a large part of their efforts to capitalising on their experience.



20 DEC Back to Phnom Penh

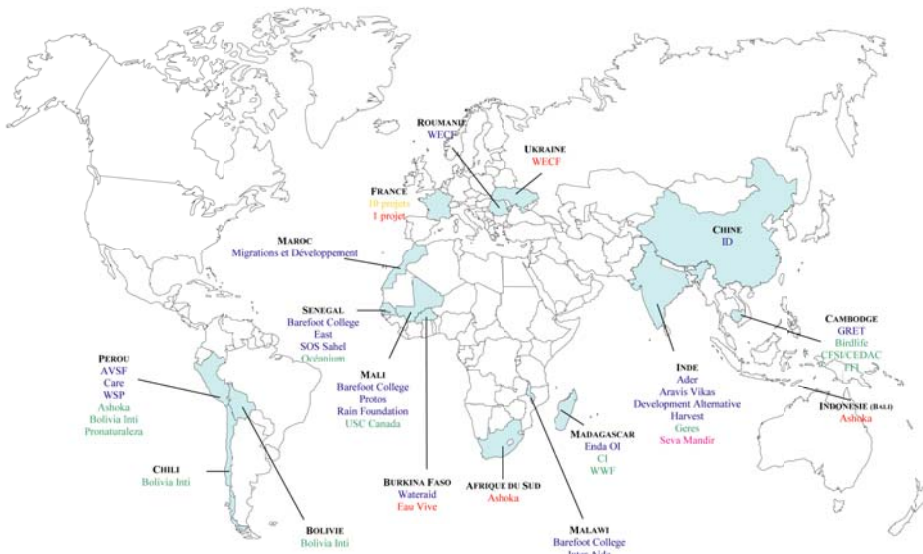
Today I visit the headquarters of CEDAC in Phnom Penh. I watch a presentation of the skills developed by this local NGO' team, which is highly involved in most of the programmes I've visited. It appears to be doing excellent work in sustainable agriculture and in capacity building.

Some of the farmers concerned are present and express their satisfaction not just about profitability but also about improved health.

The project submitted to Fondation Ensemble is located in the province of Prey Veng; the districts of Ba Phnum and Kampong Trabaek.



Towards an initial assessment.



Fondation Ensemble is involved in 44 projects. This represents a total financial commitment of more than €6.6 million out of a total investment, all partners taken together, of more than €22 million. More than €2.23 million has been spent in the field.

The Foundation is present in 14 countries. 68% of its funding is concentrated in "water and sanitation" projects, in 19 programmes, representing a total investment of €4,014,406.

The first results in figures

90,000 people (including 60,000 in Africa) have already benefited from action

concerning water and sanitation. Fondation Ensemble helps with the conservation of more than 670,000 hectares and in strengthening the capacities of more than 75 local structures. 121 building works, 2,563 latrines for over 25,000 people, 94 community organisations created, 1,400 solar ovens for as many families, and 227 establishments in France committed to sustainable development approaches.

Capitalising on experience...

This is one of the Foundation's priorities: over 90% of the projects have been visited, either by the founding members, or members of the team, or by an external assessor.

Technical sheets are available online to share the experience of field operations. Visitors to the website can find information on the Phast approach, the biogas technique, how a solar cooker or solar greenhouse works, the various methods of eco-sanitation, etc.

Visit our website, and you will find the latest information updated regularly.

Irène S. Almeras
Director, Fondation Ensemble

COMMISSION NEWS

The November 2006 commission selected the following eight projects:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT/BIODIVERSITY

- Accompaniment of local populations in Fandriana – Marolambo to restore forestry goods and services. Partner : www.wwf.fr
- Conservation of Bengal Florican and improvement of living conditions of the population around Tonle Sap. Partner : www.birdlife.org
- Cultivating agro-biodiversity for food sovereignty. Partner : www.usc-canada.org
- Development and promotion of family-based agriculture. Partner : www.cfsi.asso.fr
- IUCN framework agreement. Partner : www.iucn.org

SOLIDARITY - EDUCATION

- Alternative to pesticides week. Partner : www.mdrgf.org
- Pluriqual'irrigation. Partner : Plaine de Vie 42 rue du chemin vert. 95460 Ezanville

WATER - SANITATION

- Construction of 90 rainwater collection systems for vulnerable populations in Mali. Partner : www.rainfoundation.org
- Rainwater collection and rural electrification. Partner : www.Barefootcollege.org

Next call for projects :
Coming soon in our website :
"Forest preservation"

Date of next commission :
NOVEMBER 2007

CONTACT US

To subscribe to the newsletter and receive forthcoming issues:

www.fondationensemble.org

Do not print unless absolutely necessary.

FEATURE

IN THE FIELD



INDIA: as in most countries, the involvement of women is unquestionably an asset for the sustainability of the projects.



PERU: here the project has to adapt to high altitude conditions (+4800 m).



FRANCE: the Fondation team pays regular visits to the projects in progress.

Programme evaluations: Working hand in hand.

29 missions carried out, 7 external evaluations, over 100 reports received and examined – the 44 programmes supported by Fondation Ensemble for the past two years are subject to practically daily attention. Whatever the country, whatever the type of programme supported, the logic is the same: keep a close watch on the relevance and appropriateness of the action undertaken, and optimise the impact it has.

Once a project has been selected by the Fondation, we follow it closely. Guided tour of a typical evaluation.

Project' evaluation' first phase is selection. Let us imagine that the project has been sent to the foundation within the deadlines, in compliance with the selection procedure, and is here now, on our desk, in the form of a three-page summary. What are its chances of being accepted?

In the first instance, various project committees meet to closely examine the relevance of the project and how it matches the Fondation's criteria.

Out of 800 files received, our project will be among the tiny minority actually presented to the Experts' committee (as an indication, around thirty files at each commission).

The Experts' committee holds a forum twice a year

Let us take this opportunity to extend our warm thanks to the members of the Experts committee, who kindly lend their skills and time to the Fondation. Our programme is circulated in a forum which is very often a vehicle for adding depth. At this stage, the evaluation consists in questioning the strategy: does it make it possible to optimise

impact? Are the indicators chosen appropriate? Has the sustainability of the project been considered?

Is the partner's organisational structure solid enough? What do we know about its implementation *in situ*? What links have been set up with government organisations, etc. So many criteria are laid down, and will be used as control points in the various evaluations during the programme. At this point, the programme may give rise to the need for a field mission. But this is not systematic.

The field approach: a mine of information

Now it is July or December, the commission (which meets twice a year) has made its choice. The Projects committee and the bureau have decided. The project has been chosen. An agreement will be signed by Fondation Ensemble and the new partner.

One of the Fondation's priorities is no doubt the feedback of information

PROGRAMME EVALUATION CRITERIA

ORGANISATION/ CAPACITY

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOCAL IMPLANTATION

COMPATIBILITY WITH FONDA- TION ENSEMBLE'S OBJECTIVES

IDENTIFICATION

TARGET POPULATION

METHODOLOGY

MATCHING OF BUDGET TO RESULTS

INVOLVEMENT OF TARGET POPULATIONS

PROJECT PERPETUATION

REPLICATION



Feedback of information from the field. A mine of narrative and iconographic information.



Equipment maintenance, a factor of paramount importance for programme sustainability.

Continued from page 5

from the field. Summary sheets are kept permanently up to date, as well as monitoring indicators, narrative reports, financial statements, etc.

Photos taken on the spot. A mine of information about the life of the programmes, the difficulties encountered, and future prospects. However, the best way to ascertain whether or not a project is working is to visit the project site.

Fondation Ensemble has conducted more than 29 missions. Here, the goal is to create increased proximity to the partners and perhaps find new partners *in situ*. A mission is also an opportunity for bringing together people who do not often have the occasion to work together. The Foundation can help them in this respect, by encouraging organisations to exchange information.

Mid-term evaluation: the cornerstone of the enterprise.

The programme has reached a stage of development in the field that is sufficiently significant. Now is perhaps the time to proceed to the mid-term evaluation.

The questions posed here are straightforward: have the targets been met? Have the deadlines been respected? Is further action required? What constraints were encountered in the field? These evaluations offer a prime source of information for making the connection between the reports submitted and the actual reality.

A mid-term evaluation can be used to adjust our sights, if necessary. It may hold some good surprises and can sometimes highlight more difficult points.

Our project is coming to completion. At this stage, an evaluation provides information about the actual results obtained.

Once everything is finished, that is when it all starts...

Each project parameter is analysed in relation to the objectives that were set and the given context. However, project evaluation also involves an examination of the long-term bases of continuity. What are the tangible elements? Have the local populations adopted the project for themselves? Is equipment maintenance planned, as well as a financial participation from the beneficiaries? Will the local authorities also remain involved?

Even well after the end of the project, Fondation Ensemble intends to maintain a contact presence. This is a *sine qua non* for measuring the full impact.

Health benefits, environmental benefits, economic and social benefits, in each of the programmes supported by the Foundation, there is the mark of reasoning from a long term perspective. The project is over – what remains? How can it be sustained? How can we give it a new life? **Fondation Ensemble has a website for networking and discussion. Because the best we can wish for a project is to allow it to carry on.**