

## One training year ends and a new one begins.....

No sooner had the 92 students from the 6th intake graduated and been placed in their first job position than on the 08<sup>th</sup> of September 2008 the school reopened its doors to welcome 100 new students.

Over the past 6 years the number of our graduates reached 505\* - **64% of whom are girls** - and we achieved 100% job placement within 3 months of graduation. This result was achieved again this year, but the school continues to face difficult challenges.

Cambodia is changing... its growing population and new needs. 70% of the population are aged under 30 and 85% live in rural areas. 300.000 young people arrive on the job market every year - most of them without any skills. The rapidly developing tourism industry becomes more and more exigent and requires real professionalization from a qualified workforce. Much is staked on our school's selection criteria and the relatively short duration of its training period.

After 5 years of operations the school has had to professionalize and to adapt itself to this new context. But adaptation requires changes - and changes sometimes meet resistance. As a result of the changes introduced at the end of the 06-07 school year, the following training year was not without difficulties - while 08-09 training year is proving to be calmer!

In continuity of the actions taken last year, our objectives remain the same: Reinforcement and consolidation of the program in order to ensure its future and sustainability with 3 main priorities:

- *the training*
- *the self financing capacity of the program*
- *the program and human resources management*

### The training

Two surveys were conducted last year: the first one with our hotel partners to evaluate the evolution of professional needs in the tourism market. The second one, with



## Summary

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**What's up...**

ORION Group, was to evaluate the manuals and curriculum of the school. Both surveys lead us to a number of recommendations and action plans:

- Updating of our training content and manuals.
- Adaptation of the length of school terms to fit with internships.
- Support of the local training team in the development of their training skills.
- Improvement of learning conditions: optimization and renovation of Sala Bai facilities as well as renewal of training equipment (total investment = 38.175 US\$, 17% of the global annual budget of 2007 - 2008).
- Boost of English language through a partnership with ACE for both students and local staff.
- Organization of discovery and active learning workshops and activities for the students. More general knowledge and awareness courses relating to current problems in Cambodia (prostitution, road safety, hygiene, etc.).
- A new expatriate hired in August 2008 for the position of the Training Coordinator.

### The self financing capacity of the program

During its first 4 years of operations, Sala Bai has been mainly financed by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Auteuil International, and French donors. Since then, one of the priority objectives of the program has been to increase the self funding part of the school, as well as to diversify its sources of financing - a problem more and more important due to the increase of the global annual budget directly linked to the inflation and the needs of the school to professionalize.

Thanks to the creation of new external communication tools, to a better costing follow up and to the strong efforts of the team, the total local income (through the hotel, restaurant, cookbooks and other local resources) has allowed Sala Bai to contribute **34%** of the global annual budget for the training year 2007-2008, with **77.338 US\$** (more than twice as much as the 06-07 training year).

At the same time, the numerous actions undertaken with private sponsors, foundations and institutions have allowed us to strengthen and to enlarge the school's network of partners, representing for 2007-2008, **51%** of the annual budget.

At the end of September 2008, a new expatriate was hired for the position of Fundraising Manager in order to continue all these actions.

### The program and human resources management

The need to professionalize has not only required the review and formalization of all the administration management processes, but also a reorganization of the team, effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2008:

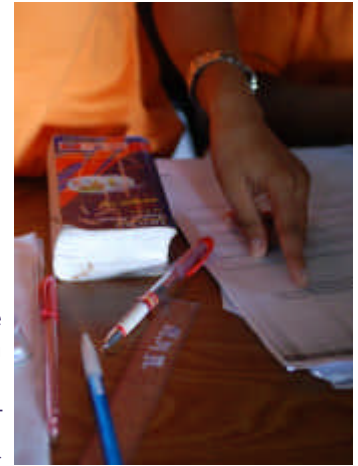
- 7 Departments with intermediate management levels: 4 Support Function Departments and 3 Operations Departments.
- More than half of the local staff replaced.
- 4 repositionings and internal promotions to middle management positions with a professional training development plan and transfer of competences.
- 2 new expatriates.

A total staff of 23 persons: 19 Khmers, including 9 trainers, 3 social workers and 7 support services personnel, in addition to 4 expatriates for technical support.

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But today, this is the time of the start of the new school year. The 100 students of the new intake are actually experiencing their first apprenticeship steps. Half of them have begun training in the industry, while the other ones are practicing at school with the reopening of the training hotel and restaurant on 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2008. To all of them, we wish a year full of experience and promise. And to our readers "Welcome to the world of our 7<sup>th</sup> intake and enjoy your reading...!"

*Ampor SAM OEUN, Director - AFVP volunteer*



## 100 % success!

**W**ithin 3 months of their graduation ceremony, all our 07-08 intake\* students have found employment in the hospitality industry with the assistance of our 3 social workers. The average salary is \$71.57, with a minimum of \$50 and a maximum of \$125. Sixteen of the students have been recruited in the hotel where they served their internship and most of the others found a job within a month.

In total this year, 36 hotels and restaurants hired staff from Sala Bai. Many thanks to all of them for giving our students the chance to enter working life.

*\*except 3 students presently serving a 6-month internship in France*



## School Calendar 2008 - 2009

* 8 September	Beginning of the school year
* 8 Sep - 20 Oct (6 weeks)	All students at school
* 20 October	Training Hotel & Restaurant reopening
* 20 Oct - 29 Dec (10 weeks)	◦ Group A in internship* ◦ Group B at school
* 29 Dec - 9 March (9 weeks)	◦ Group B in internship ◦ Groupe A at school
* 9 March - 11 May (9 weeks)	◦ Group A in internship ◦ Group B at school
* 11 - 20 April	Khmer New Year - Sala Bai will be closed!
* 11 May - 5 July (8 weeks)	◦ Group B in internship ◦ Groupe A at school
* 6 - 17 July	All students at school for revisions
* 20 - 24 July	Theoretical and practical exams
* 27 - 29 July	End of school year trip
* Beginning of Aug.	Graduation Ceremony

\* spread across 16 hotel partners

## Student' story: my first 6 weeks at Sala Bai



**M**y name is **MEAN Mom** and I am a Restaurant student. I'm 23 years old and I come from Siem Reap Province. There are 11 in my family, my parents are farmers. I have a blind sister and a dumb and deaf brother. I still have 2 brothers studying at school.

I had to stop school at grade 9, when I was 19, because our living conditions were very difficult as my parents were both sick. When I stopped studying I first went to work at the Thailand border as a grass and long bean planter - I got 1.5\$ a day. Then, I came back to my village to harvest the rice for people in my village - I got 1.7\$. I used this small amount of money for my parents' treatment. My family has a very small rice field which cannot produce enough rice for us - sometimes we had to borrow the rice from our neighbors.

Why did I decide to study at Sala Bai? Because the knowledge and skills I gain here can enable me to find a good job and brighter future. For the first 6 weeks at school I felt nervous and happy at the same as I knew I was lucky to study here.

We had many activities and some visits. For example, we went to some partner hotels and we felt very ex-

cited and so surprised as we had never seen those kinds of hotels before. We also went to Angkor Wat Temple and the National Museum where we saw many interesting things and now we can understand more about our traditional culture and legends.

Then, we had several conferences about work behavior: ethics, morale, team spirit, responsibility and flexibility - and where we were taught to be hard-working, patient, perseverant and punctual.

The positive thing since I've been studying at Sala Bai, is that I've learned already so many new things! Of course, technical and general knowledge, but also funny things... the day I moved into our Sala Bai accommodation I was very surprised, I saw many new things in my life - like a bathroom - and we all had to figure out how it worked! Then at the Lucky Market Mall, I saw this very strange thing: an escalator!

But, I have also met difficulties, like learning English for the first time; I have to take orders from the guests and often I don't understand what they mean - or - I forget the order! That's why I feel nervous about my upcoming internship at the Raffles Grand Hotel - but, I will do my best to be a good trainee.

After Sala Bai, I want to be a Food and Beverage Manager; I am not afraid to work hard. When I have gained enough experience it will be able to help my family, my country and have a better life. After six weeks here, I feel already that my life has started to change...

*MEAN Mom, Restaurant Student*

## Discovering activities

**I** worked at Sala Bai for three weeks as a volunteer at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year. My main duties involved helping plan and organize activities for the students.

We took the students to visit some hotels they would soon do internships at, Angkor Wat and many of the interesting places in Siem Reap.

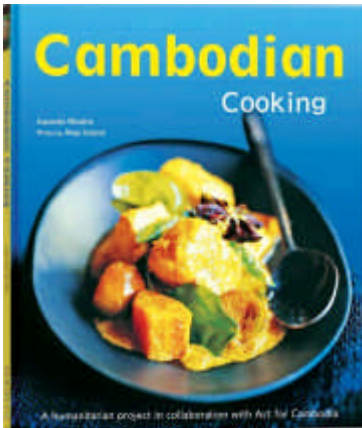
Our trip to Angkor Wat was the first for a lot of students. After a long bike ride to reach the temples, lots of hiking around the Angkor Wat complex, and, finally, traditional Khmer games played with the staff against a backdrop of the temples, the students left for home that day feeling exhausted but happy.



During my third week, we visited Senteurs d'Angkor's workshop. The students were given a tour of the facilities and got to learn about the process of making aromatic soaps and various spices from beginning to end. We also visited the Center for Khmer Studies, a library within Wat Damnak. Students browsed books on South-east Asia and read Khmer-language story books.

I wish I could have stayed longer at Sala Bai. What strikes me about Sala Bai is how hands-on the program is. Students receive an entire year of training including a six-month internship at a five-star hotel, something that not many Cambodians can put on their resume or CV. I look forward to hearing some of the students' stories about their internships and life after Sala Bai.

*Kevin KALHOEFER, Peace Corps Volunteer*



## Launching of Sala Bai cookbook in English

You may already be familiar with «La cuisine du Cambodge avec les apprentis de Sala Bai», our recipe book in French. After having dreamt about it, we have finally got it in an English version!

Just to remind you: The creation of the book was instigated by Joannès RIVIERE who volunteered at Sala Bai in 2003-2005 to train the teachers in the Cooking department and David LALLEMAND and Dominique DEBOURGKNECHT, 2 French volunteers, taking a year sabbatical. After having collected enough money and having contacted Maja SMEND, a culinary photographer, the book was finally launched.

Why this book? Joannès recipes - in homage to the Cambodian culinary variety - proved a big success; Sala Bai, trying to devise means to increase its self-funding; and two volunteers, willing to get involved in a humanitarian project were enough to make this book a reality! A cookbook which achieved large success as soon as its release (Picquier Editions), with delicious recipes, simple and within reach of everybody!

It is now published in English *Cambodian Cooking*, in different format, Periplus Editions) and widely distributed (Southeast Asia, USA, UK, Australia...).

We really had to celebrate such an event! Last November 7<sup>th</sup>, we organized the launching of the book in collaboration with Periplus Editions and the Hotel de la Paix (a five-star hotel and Sala Bai partner, where Joannès operates now as the Chef Executive). The event was split into two parts: a cooking class ran by Joannès at

Sala Bai for the guests from the media\* and a private cocktail evening kindly hosted by the Hotel de la Paix where 100 invited guests joined the party. A party kindly offered by the Hotel de la Paix. The guests who tasted the canapés, inspired from the cookbook recipes, had the opportunity to buy the cookbook on the spot! The proceeds received from the cookbook sales on the day, or at Sala Bai help support the students training year. One book at \$33 = 4 training day costs per student.

We are grateful to:

\* The Periplus Editions - for the publication of the invitations and for having provided accommodation and air-tickets for the media guests

\* The Hotel de la Paix - for their financial and organizational support

\* And in particular, Chef Joannès - for his involvement with Sala Bai in the past, present, and we hope, the future!

*Amélie VERBEKE, Sales & Communication Manager  
- AFVP Volunteer*

*Phnom Penh Post & Asia Life (Cambodia), Bangkok Post (Thailand), Going Places (Malaysia), Luxury Travel Magazine (Australia) & Berkeley Books (Singapore)*



## Delightful reality

I have been an Agir Pour le Cambodge member for 12 years and I have always been touched and impressed by the actions undertaken by the teams in the field. This year, I came to Cambodia for the first time. Even if the way I perceive the program hasn't changed, actually coming to Sala Bai has added a dimension of reality that I previously lacked.



What remains uppermost in my memory are the faces: the eyes, the smiles, the willingness to make contact, the cheerfulness and conviviality! A lot of people: 100 students in a very limited space, but I didn't feel pressure or anxiety: just serenity and more smiles.

We are here for them: for them, but also for the 505 who were here before them and to help more... and more later on.

And then, there is the team: Cambodians, French... all young, some don't even look older than the students, not surprising in a country where 70% of the population is less than 30 years old.

These people ARE Sala Bai, just as much as the students. They ARE this program... smiling, attentive... aware of the importance of their work.

Indeed, I am struck by the discrepancy between what I had imagined Sala Bai to be prior my visit and the delightful reality.

*Georges-Henry LE ROY, APLC Secretary*

## Sala Bai & ACE\* partnership

### Sala Bai point of view...

Last September, all Sala Bai staff and students took a test at ACE to establish their level of English language skill.

In accordance with Sala Bai's objectives to enhance training, it was decided that this school year we should enlist ACE to help improve the level of the staff's English language ability and so, the quality of their training; and secondly, to focus on our beginners level students in order to get them off to a good start through international methods of teaching.

In collaboration with ACE, a special intensive English course was organized for 67 students consisting of five one hour lessons per week over a period of four weeks, in addition to our normal English language program. It was a real challenge for everybody! A test was given at the end of the course to establish their level of improvement.

Sala Bai staff have already started their first term of study according to their level. We will study for a total of 45 hours at Sala Bai expense.

We at Sala Bai wish to extend our sincere thanks to ACE for their generous contribution to our school.

*Sambath CHHUN & Chan Sokun SO, Teachers of English*

### ACE point of view...

A sea of saffron swam into ACE every weekday for four weeks in October 2008. On their push-bikes, the sea is made up of the current group of Sala Bai trainees in their orange t-shirts coming to ACE for their English Language classes with Prim Saratt and Apdul Gany, both experienced teachers of English at ACE.

This remedial English Language programme was conceived after the results of ACE English language proficiency testing revealed that many of them do not have



enough English to benefit fully from the rigorous training programme that Sala Bai had designed for them. It is one of the few programmes in the ACE and Sala Bai partnership to improve the English Language proficiency of the trainees and staff of Sala Bai.

Here is what the teachers have to say: Saratt was full of praise for his students from the cooking classes. In his words, "They may have very Basic English but their motivation to learn and determination to work hard is impressive. I enjoyed teaching them".

Gany, who was responsible for two classes (Restaurant - Front Office class and Housekeeping class) also had nothing but good things to say of his students, who had to pass the stringent poverty tests set by Sala Bai so as to ensure that the scholarship is given to those truly in need. Of his students, he said, "They are so willing to participate in activities in the class; be it writing on the whiteboard or practice speaking in pairs or groups. It was a joy being able to help them learn".

*Seokho TAN, ACE Director*

\* IDP is owned by the universities in Australia, to represent Australian education overseas and operates internationally. IDP established its office in Cambodia in 1992 and through the Australian Centre for Education (ACE) offers English Language Teaching

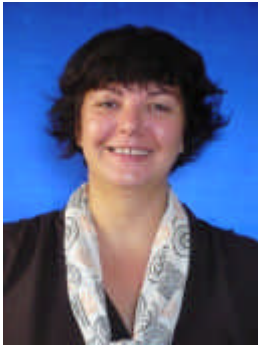
## Renewal of Financial Support

**ORION Hotel Schools:** Last October, Sala Bai School received a check of US\$ 50,000 from Fritz GUBLER, ORION Hotel School Chairman. We are glad to renew this precious partnership for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive intake and we thank everyone from this Schools Network for their involvement in any event organized for our school and for the small equipment donation of US\$ 3,201.

**USAID through Asia Foundation:** US\$ 26,400 was granted to support 100% Sala Bai 08-09 intake students' food allowance (\$22 a month per student) over a period of 12 months from September 2008 to August 2009. US\$ 2,268 unspent from the last intake will cover a part of the students' accommodation for this training year. It's the second year that USAID, through Asia Foundation is renewing their confidence in our program.



## Portraits



I joined the Sala Bai team last August as the Training Coordinator after having been on a few consulting missions last training year.

I learned about Sala Bai through the cookbook from the school *La Cuisine du Cambodge* when it first appeared and I subsequently visited the school in 2006.

Before coming to Cambodia, I worked for 18 years at KPMG as Financial Auditor and then as Project Manager. From 1990 to 2005, I was in charge of the creation and setting up of all the IT training according to the evolution of the information system. In 2005, I decided to add another dimension to my career and I enrolled in a Cooking Certificate at Grégoire Ferrandi School. I became a culinary author and photographer for various media and food industries before taking a step up and opening my own restaurant *La Maison Bleue*, in Cambodia, now closed.

I hope to bring my professional experience to the Agir Pour Le Cambodge program and to contribute as best as I can to its sustainability.

I help the teachers and trainers in formalizing their classes, from the teaching objective to their presentation. My duty is to help them to pass on to the students their skills as they are all professionals from the hospitality industry but have no experience in teaching. Besides that, I have been participating in the formalization of the procedures and their application for the Restaurant and Cooking Departments.

*Anne ROLLAND, Training Coordinator - Guilde volunteer*



Hi! Let me introduce myself, I'm the newest French volunteer... Caroline, 30 years old, from the south of France, without the singing accent!

After graduating from a Hotel School and 10 years of working experience in the hospitality industry, I wanted to add a social dimension to my job and integrate it with the human values so precious to me.

So... in January of this year I undertook a 6-month Humanitarian Project Management course and then, I started looking for a job that would combine my two competences - and Sala Bai has given me that opportunity! Now.. I'm in charge of the Fundraising Department. During the few weeks I have spent here, I've been discovering an organization which has adapted itself to the realities of Cambodian culture; the character of the students, the difficulties they face at home and here at school; a culture which appeals to me...

Simply put, it's a beautiful program which gives me wings, and motivation to help it going far, far, far...

*Caroline JOUVE, Fundraising Manager - AFVP volunteer*



I have been working at Sala Bai since August 2008 as a restaurant trainer. Previously, I was an English and Computer studies teacher for four years and for the last three years I have worked in the Hotel Industry at Sofitel Royal Angkor Resort and Sokha Angkor Resort.

I applied here for the position of Restaurant Trainer because I like teaching, and this position is related to my previous work and skills. I will do my best to teach Sala Bai students, share my experience with them and provide them with the skills essential for working in the hotel industry.

I am very proud to work at Sala Bai; I like my position as a team member. I shall do my best to learn the skills needed at the school and to pass them on to the students.

*Dara KONG, Restaurant Trainer*



I started working at Sala Bai as a Housekeeping Trainer last September. I am particularly interested in working here as it gives me an opportunity to help Cambodian youth to find a career and support their families. I was employed previously at Raffles Grand Hotel and at La Résidence d'Angkor over a period of 7 years. Now, I am eager to share my experience in the hospitality industry with the students at Sala Bai. My work here will be more than providing the standard service of a hotel. What I do here is more personal and will help many young Cambodians to develop character and skills necessary to succeed in life.

*Thy THI, Housekeeping Trainer*

## Promotions!

**UNG Rithy** previously Housekeeping Trainer and working at Sala Bai since 2002 was promoted *Rooms Division Supervisor and Front Office Trainer* in September 2008.

**KIM Khemara**, previously Social Worker and working at Sala Bai since 2003 was promoted *Student Services Coordinator & Social Worker Senior* in September 2008.

**CHAN Sokha**, previously Restaurant Trainer and working at Sala Bai since 2006 was promoted *Restaurant Supervisor and Trainer Senior* in September 2008.

Congratulations to all of them!

## What's up...

### Visitors:

#### In September:

- **Agir Pour le Cambodge:** Xavier ESCHERMANN - President & Georges-Henry LE ROY - Secretary

#### In October:

- **ORION Hotel Schools,** Fritz GUBLER - Chairman

#### In November:

- **French Embassy** in Cambodia, His Ambassador Jean-François DESMAZIERES
- **EPSR\***, Mrs Linda ADAMS - Senior Social Development Consultant & Samoeun CHAP - Poverty & Community Development Consultant for a diagnostic work
- **Journalists for the launch of our English cookbook:** Nicholas GROSSMAN, from *Bangkok Post* (Thailand); Vivian CHONG, from *Going Places* (Malaysia); Jennifer Francis Caspersonn, from *Luxury Travel Magazine* (Australia); Diana SOW, from *Asian Life* (Cambodia); Dean GREEN, from *Phnom Penh Post* (Cambodia)

\* *Empowerment of the Poor in Siem Reap Project. Its objective is to improve incomes and capacities of the poor by more effectively linking their livelihoods to the tourism industry. A project in collaboration with the Cambodian Ministry of Interior, the World Bank and Tourism & Leisure Advisors.*

**Three Students from Intake 07-08 in internship in France:** In October, Sophorn SENG (Front Office), Chamroeun SING (Cooking) and Lav SORN (Restaurant), 3 students from the 07-08 intake left for a 6-month internship in France. This amazing opportunity for these students was made possible thanks to a strong partnership -for the 3rd consecutive year - with La Fondation Mérieux and Le Centre de Conférences Les Pensières. We wish them a great experience and expect them to come back to Cambodia with many valuable new skills and happy memories.

### Conferences & workshops:

- **Share Experiences** with former Sala Bai graduates
- **Road Safety** by Sala Bai social workers, in partnership with Handicap International / Belgium
- **Child Sex Tourism Prevention** by Sak PRACH and his colleague - World Vision
- **C.H.A.N.G.E - the Workplace Environment** by Mehran CHINNIAH - Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa Human Resources Manager
- **Team Building** by Joffrey GRIS - La Maison d'Angkor General Manager

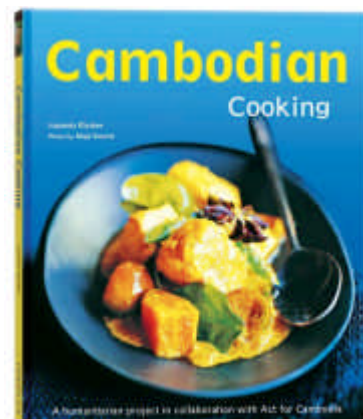


### Hotel visits:

During the first six weeks at school, each of the 100 students visited 2 hotels (in different categories). This year, Sala Bai partner hotels are 16 in total: L'Hôtel de la Paix, Le Meridien, Le Sofitel, L'Amansara, La Résidence d'Angkor, Le Sokha, Le Victoria, Le Raffles - Grand Hotel, Le FFC, le Bopha Angkor, L'Angkor Century, La Maison d'Angkor, L'Apsara Holiday, L'Angkor Palace, L'Empress & Le Tara Angkor.

## How to Support our Students...

- ? **Having breakfast and lunch at our training restaurant:**  
=> 1 meal at \$8 = 1 training day cost per student
- ↔ **Staying in our training Hotel:**  
=> 1 night at \$15 = 2 training days cost per student
- **Purchasing our Recipe book (\$33)** = 4 training days
- **Sponsoring a student:** The annual training cost for one student is \$3000. If you wish, you can contribute monthly towards a students' school fee.
- **Making a donation:** To help us purchase new equipment & materials necessary for teaching and improving the quality of our training program.
- **Promoting Sala Bai in your country,** such as organizing charity events, fundraising campaigns, cook books, Khmer handcraft sales etc...



*Interested by sponsorship, donation or promotion? Please, contact us:*

[info@salabai.com](mailto:info@salabai.com)

**Th@nks !!!**