

Finding Hope and Courage in Cambodia

I met Isaac in 2006. He was tall, broad-shouldered with kind eyes and a confident stride. He spoke softly and his slightly accented English was easy to understand.

I was a very new Regional Coordinator then, and was visiting all of the three study centers in Cambodia – House of Love, House of Joy and House of Peace – for the first time. Isaac was my translator and chauffeur. I rode on the back of his motorbike for the visits.

Translating for me and guiding me around the Houses was Isaac's distinct way of giving back. Isaac was a former ICCM-sponsored child.

How long does it take for a child to participate in an ICCM-assisted study center so his life could be significantly shaped and changed?

This is Isaac's testimony.

"As a child born to a poor farmer, I faced many difficulties and challenges. I had to work hard in the rice field. It was a hand-to-mouth existence. I thought I had no chance of going to high school.

"I was always afraid about tomorrow – that my parents would not be able to support me to finish high school or send me to university.



"Fortunately, I had the chance to be sponsored by ICCM during my last year in high school. At first, it seemed like I was transported to a new world! I had access to food, schooling, uniform and school supplies. The sponsorship gave me **hope and courage** as I studied. The sponsorship lightened my parents' burden. They could not afford to send me to school.

"At House of Love (after school study center) I found love, joy and friendship. Sharing meals and learning together taught me life skills: how to communicate with



people, how to relate with people from other cultures and cope with difficulties and different experiences."

Isaac's last name is "Mourning." The years before his

ICCM sponsorship were very difficult. Since his sponsorship, Isaac has been experiencing not merely a few mornings with new beginnings but thousands and thousands of mornings punctuated by new beginnings.

Isaac graduated from university with a degree in Development. He gives back by serving as Sunday school teacher and church board member. Isaac takes an active part in church planting. He helps out at ICCM by serving on the ICCM National Committee. The Committee helps the ICCM National Coordinator develop policies and guidelines appropriate to the Cambodian context.

Being a sponsored child has shaped Isaac's choice of a full-time job. Today he



Continued on pg. 2.

Continued from pg. 1.

serves as Technical Officer for Child Protection with another child sponsorship program. He supervises eight Project Coordinators and makes sure they implement child protection plans well and on time. Isaac is married and has two wonderful kids!



During his time there, House of Love focused on giving tutorials and giving nutritious meals three times a day. In recent years factories have been coming into the village and have considerably

improved the people's economic conditions.

Not long ago, House of Love, House of Joy and House of Peace started using the Holistic Child Development approach. The children come to the Houses on Sunday afternoon for four hours. They are divided into age groups and take part in age-appropriate classes addressing all four aspects of children's growth: spiritual, physical, cognitive and social-emotional. At the end of their lessons, they share a nutritious meal of rice, meat and veggies, fruit and milk or juice.



Isaac's children will be spared from experiencing the hardships of grinding poverty and being vulnerable to child trafficking – a fearful possibility for all the children in the villages sur-

rounding Cambodia's three study centers. Isaac's children are growing up in a Christian home and getting quality education.

Most likely, Isaac's grandchildren will also grow up in Christian homes and be spared from malnourishment, from being vulnerable to trafficking, and go to university; and so will the hundreds of ICCM-sponsored children in Cambodia's House of Love, House of Joy and House of Peace.



ICCM Upgrade

Linda Adams, ICCM Director

Soon ICCM will be shifting to a new database system, our biggest upgrade in 10 years. Hopefully, this will greatly improve your sponsorship experience. It includes a new website with much greater access to your sponsored child's data and your own giving records.

The website and database will be connected to a new credit card and EFT provider. When you create a login and password for the first time, we will ask you to verify and edit your contact information and payment information, if you make electronic donations. Once you have created this account, you will be able to see all your child's past and current photos, review his or her birth date, and see whether your online payment succeeded or your mailed check has been applied to the account.

Further details will come but we wanted to give you a heads-up so when you hear from us asking you to visit the site, you'll know it's really ICCM! Thanks for your loyalty and support.