

Frontpage for Friends (FfF) Mailnews

Salesian Youth Missionary Animation Newsletter
Cambodia

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THE GOOD NEWS FOR TODAY

Dear Friends,

Much flooding of 2011 affected our DBCF children destroying some houses and many farms. "They have been left with nothing. They have no food." We, the staff at the DBCF Secretariat visited them and offered our communion in their sad state bringing signs and symbols of encouragement and goodwill. Here we share with you, dear readers, their situations, difficulties and sufferings.

Children living along rivers could swim, but many of those who lived where the floods had never risen so high could not. Therefore, half of those who drown were children. The poorest families did not have boats. When the water rose above their floors, some parents had to cut the banana trees and bamboo to quickly fashion rafts to transport their children and belongings that could be salvaged to safe ground. These safe areas were like refugee camps without food, shelter and or access to medicines and sanitation facilities. The sad fact is that, rural Cambodians are dependent on their one annual harvest of rice, much of which has been destroyed in flood-hit areas of 18 provinces out of 24 provinces and cities. So they have been left with nothing. They have no food. Ring wells have been filled with floodwater, which is unsafe to drink. Many wells have been damaged or remained submerged.

About 800,000 children have been affected by these recent floods and the number of people affected is 1.6 million but the children are the most vulnerable to emergencies as their families struggle to cope with the loss of houses, crops and livelihoods and in some cases, family members. Every day a child is absent from school increases, the risk of dropping out in the long term. Making matter worst, even waters begin to recede, stagnant water combined with poor sanitation and hygiene is likely to breed diseases to which the children are vulnerable. Increase poverty and the loss of family income, may also force children to work to support the families, not only taking them out of the school but also putting them at risk of exploitation and trafficking.

The worst happening is that some villages cannot be reached and therefore the problem of getting food and house to stay increases. Some areas we cannot reach to distribute the help that we can offer as the roads had been cut. It will take time and investment to recover to produce something from their farming work. This disaster brought damaged to many schools that have remained submerged and affected by floods and will remain closed for sometimes. Many families are scrambling to survive and their children are left alone which heightens their vulnerability to risk. Others have to make temporarily their houses in dried places like the sides of roads.





Three provinces that we have many children of DBCF affected are Kompong Thom, Kompong Cham and Prey Veng where as many as 100,000 people were affected. Rehabilitation of their houses and their livelihood will be the main concern. From the National committee for Disaster Management the estimate of the number of people directly affected by the flooding will be from 1.2 million to 1.6 million. DBCF tried the best to visit the most



affected areas and to encourage the children to go and remain in schools because many children will join to enter the workforce to help their families to recover.

Here are the places where our DBCF children most affected by the 2011 flooding-

- ✦ **Kompong Thom:** One of the provinces hardly hit. The DBCF distribution center on ground of the Catholic Church was flooded. They can be reached to their houses by boats, such are the villages of Mneav, Kompong Kor, Prek Sbao, Kompong Rotes and Balang. These families have problem with food and drinking water. Children don't go the schools yet as the school grounds are flooded.
- ✦ **Kompong Cham:** This is another province badly hit. 270 schools were affected and 101 schools are still completely closed according to the Kompong Cham's education department. All the paddy fields where our DBCF live were flooded and destroyed. They lack food and drinking water. Transportation is done only by boats.
- ✦ **Prey Veng:** Most of the village schools were affected and 80% families of the population were affected and are still in very bad situation for their houses and livelihood. Two villages, at Peam Ror and Peam Sdey have 100% of DBCF families were flooded.
- ✦ **Svay Rieng:** In the village of Kor Angderk, one DBCF family's house was destroyed by typhoon and most fields got flooded.

The Don Bosco Secretariat visited some children and their families reaching them by boats and still noticed the marks and prints that the water left when the floods visited them.



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JOURNEYING WITH THE YOUNG

