

Renovation of „Khemara Kidshelp School“ by „Akzo Nobel“

As the attentive followers of our Facebook page might have already noticed, there has been some refurbishment at our school which has been organized and financed by the Dutch company Akzo Nobel. The initial communication for this cooperation was begun around a year ago by Patrick Byron; a long-standing, regular supporter and friend of Kidshelp Kambodscha e.V. Patrick used to work for DHL in Germany, and through that has many business contacts throughout the world including the executive staff of Akzo Nobel in Singapore.



The school's paint-work - especially the front - was severely damaged as a result of the ongoing road construction. Patrick had the idea of asking for some help from his business contacts for the repainting of the building.

In the first instance we were hoping to get some free paint. But to our delight Akzo Nobel exceeded this hope by offering to not only supply the paint for free, but also supply the contractors to do the actual painting. To top off their generosity they wanted to conduct an official handing-over ceremony where they gave each attending student a gift pack, which included: A work-book, pencil, sweets, drink, a chocolate donut, and various other trinkets. This really made the kids smile.



The dancing performance



The students of the school with their gift bags from Akzo Nobel

Oops, I'm getting ahead of myself here, so let me take this story back a bit. Once Patrick had a pledge from Akzo Nobel, on the 09th of September a delegation from Singapore arrived to get an idea of the situation and sort out where more help might be needed. During the inspection it became clear that Akzo Nobel had the intention to provide some more support. Finally they decided to give the school a complete paint inside and outside and to renovate the student's bathroom. In order to minimise disruption of the classes the contractors set out to complete all tasks in one week - they succeeded.

At the end of October the moment had arrived. The painting contractors came in from Phnom Penh and set about reinvigorating our school. Of course the classes had to be adjusted for this period with a bit of moving about and rescheduling. For those that have seen the school consider for a moment the school's very high walls and large surface areas. Now imagine that entirety of the school was painted and the toilets got a complete refurbishment with new tiles, sinks and doors - all done in one week!

The rainy season in Cambodia ends in mid-November and there are also some important public holidays during that time, so it was agreed that the handing-over ceremony should take place on the 28th of November.

On the morning of the special day a group of employees from a Cambodian TV-Station along with their event mangers showed up at the school with video cameras, still image cameras and gift packs.

Along with the usual plethora of equipment that make up a Cambodian event: large tent, a stage, big speakers and amplifiers - they brought along an enormous bill board printed just for this event that showed the purpose of the exercise. The main event was opened by a traditional show dance that some of the students had prepared. Some short speeches were made by David Teng of Akzo Nobel and Raphael Weyel of Kidshelp Kambodscha e.V. both of whom pointed out the importance of a friendly environment for a good learning experience. Of course David expressed Akzo Nobel's excitement for being able to contribute to such a worthy cause; and Raphael expressed Kidshelp's profound gratitude. The ceremony was concluded by a celebratory unveiling of plaque brandishing Akzo Nobel's name and contribution; and the handing out of gift packs to 390 eager students who couldn't wait to smear chocolate all over their smiling faces.



Added to all this are our two marvelous volunteers who have spent much of their time during the last few weeks working with students decorating the classrooms. Together with the children they have produced some elaborate decorations with a different theme in each classroom.

The combination of all of this has resulted in a much more student-friendly and better learning environment.



On behalf of our students, teachers and employees I we would like to thank everyone who participated in this project.

Yours Kidshelp Kambodscha e.V. Team in Cambodia and Germany.