

Grameen Gazette #47

What's Happening ...

1. **Livestock Training Centre Land Update** - the perfect land is almost secured
2. **Inaugural Social Business Masterclass**- a resounding and inspirational success
3. **Australian Microfinance**- A second visit by Grameen America's operational founder Shah Newaz has progressed the report to 80% completion

1. The search for land for our Livestock Training Centre is OVER

Our amazing Livestock Training Centre Crowdfunding Campaign provided us with the funds for the perfect land - but it initially proved elusive as ownership is hard to secure when competition is fierce and ownership documentation is rare in war-ravaged Cambodia.

During the chaos of the Khmer Rouge, one of their many acts was to force people off their land and cease their ownership, with all holdings of land and real estate cancelled during the era. At the end of the regime, millions were dead - and of those left, millions more had been forced off or fled their land. As a result, land disputes have become a serious and ongoing issue across the Cambodia.

We saw this firsthand when we purchased our first block of land to establish



the Centre, as the journey to ownership was challenging. This time around we know the process, so once we knew we had hit our Crowdfunding target we started the process of formally securing our 'perfect land'. Disappointingly a range of challenges, including commercial pressures in the competitive Siem Reap market and paperwork that could not be confirmed, forced us to expand our search. Over the past 7 weeks we

have investigated 12 blocks within a 2 hour radius of our current farm with most ruled out due to lack of documentation, inflated prices or insufficient quality to meet our needs.

“We develop sustainable social businesses that empower very poor people to climb out of poverty themselves”



But the search is now over - we have found just what we need, a block of well-positioned land 45min from our current farm with good roads, cost effective access to electricity and best of all, it is high enough to mitigate risk of flooding. A deposit has been put down and discussions are well underway to complete the documentation to finalise the sale.

Now we need to build our Layer Farm - can you support us monthly or with a one-off donation to ensure our new farmer entrepreneurs can build their own businesses to secure their families food and futures.

Just the cost of one takeaway meal a week makes an enormous difference in Cambodia



2. Inaugural Social Business Masterclass a resounding and inspirational success



12 curious, thoughtful, inspiring people joined us at our first Social Business Masterclass, generously hosted by The Entourage. They were taken on a journey to gain an insight into how social business actually works in action ... but the real journey was one of discovery, in which they were asked how they could escape the status quo by building their own story of a new future where personal fulfillment and community impact sit side-by-side.

The results of the class were phenomenal even to us - the group began to design powerfully interconnected, community based solutions for some of Australia's most intractable problems, homelessness, housing affordability and the accelerating pace of change and jobs. And the conversation did not end when the day concluded - the group discussion has continued as they reach into their various networks and knowledge banks to see how they can take their ideas into actions.

Read more about the journey undertaken on the day here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/social-business-solve-entrenched-problems-kat-dunn>

Peter Thornton and Puay-Yuen Leow from Mettafood generously supported the event with delicious plant based whole food for lunch. This is their way to encourage social entrepreneurs to consider the impact of their daily food choices and their social business decisions as more and more evidence is showing the adverse effects animal agriculture and animal foods have on human health, the sustainability of the environment and on animal welfare.



"We develop sustainable social businesses that empower very poor people to climb out of poverty themselves"

Going plant based is very much in line with part of Professor Yunus' philosophy of Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, Zero Carbon Emissions. Any social business set up to solve a significant social issue should consider the direct and indirect consequences it has on other factors such as the environment which we all share.

If the participants had eaten plant-based food for just one day, they would have already saved roughly 3,748 litres of water, 16 kg of grain, 3 sqm of forest, 8 kg of Co2 and the life of up to 1 animal.

3. Australian Microfinance

The Business Study into the viability of Grameen style Microfinance in Australia has been boosted by a second visit from Grameen America's operational founder Shah Newaz. The Study's focus is on analysis of the need for the initiative as an alternative solution to socio-economic issues confronting Australia, and whether a viable model can be applied to connect targeted clients to the economic value chain as has been done in the US and more than 40 other countries around the globe.

The Study is a unique and challenging undertaking as the distinctly Grameen style of microfinance has not been tested in the Australian environment. Time is being taken to undertake rigorous testing of the social, financial, legal, technical and resourcing assumptions, with the objective of developing a robust, viable solution for some of Australia's most endemic social issues.



Grameen Australia is an Australian not-for-profit organisation with Public Benevolent Institution and DGR1 status, so donations are tax deductible to donors in Australia.

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