

# 2014 OverView

Child Development | Medical Stream | Education Projects

Heal

Educate



Child Development

Awareness Cambodia is proud to partner with Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993) in projects J515 & J675. Global Development Group (GDG) is an Australian DFAT-approved NGO carrying out quality humanitarian projects and providing long term solutions to poverty. GDG provides governance and assists in the areas of planning, monitoring, evaluating and auditing to ensure the projects are carried out to DFAT requirements. Tax deductible receipts for gifts over \$2 with a preference for these projects are issued by the Awareness Cambodia Overseas Aid Fund (ABN 15 815 273 527). If projects are overfunded, funds may be applied to other approved project activities. Please note that no evangelistic, welfare or political activities are a part of or funded by these aid and development projects.

# A Message from Awareness Cambodia's FOUNDER and CEO

I first set foot in Cambodia as a volunteer dentist in 1995, little realising the experience was to become a watershed in my life. The scene was reminiscent of a horror movie. A stifling heat and haze simply added to the dust, sweat and discomfort as young children with threadbare clothes lined up for treatment. My young patients appeared physically stunted for their age and beyond sad, but it was a look in their faces that stayed with me long after travelling down the Mekong. Those eyes almost without emotion and faces hardened beyond their years by the trauma of existence in such a hell. How could I simply pack my bags and walk away? Turns out I couldn't. Awareness Cambodia was born and the rest is now history.



Above: A young Gary

You know deep down each of us knows we're here to live for a purpose that's bigger than me - we can all change someone's world.

No matter what comes our way, we can never allow it to distract us from who a

little girl on the streets of Cambodia could become. A dream of how a disabled, discarded exploited orphan can live. A dream for the poor and disadvantaged, that they too should enjoy a positive future. To dare to try what we've not tried before, to have a heart that's prepared to penetrate areas where people say don't go.

In fact I'm convinced if you don't like the way the world is you have an obligation to change it; one life at a time. And there's nothing more important to any community than bringing a sense of hope.

I'm proud today that the Awareness Cambodia team, armed with a belief in the intrinsic value of every young soul, is doing just that.

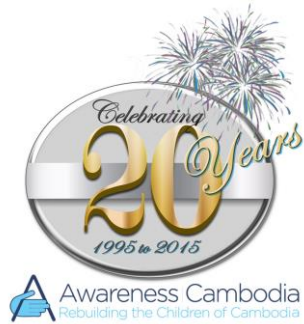
None of this would be possible without our supporters. One man said, "There are no problems we cannot solve together and very few that we can solve by ourselves".

Today as a result of your support and selfless giving, orphaned Cambodian children who have lost everything and been exposed to all kinds of abuse and exploitation are rebuilding their lives in a safe and nurturing environment.

In the coming decades what we've begun together will continue producing innovative and passionate young leaders like this year's University graduates, Chumrarn and Somphos. These leaders will continue to change Cambodia, well beyond my grave.

This year marks another exciting milestone for Awareness Cambodia as we celebrate 20 years of service to the most vulnerable (1995 – 2015).

Thank you for your support and partnership that Awareness Cambodia has enjoyed over the last 20 years. We couldn't have done it without you!



**Dr Gary Hewett**  
Founder and CEO

“ There are no problems we  
cannot solve **together**  
and very few we  
can solve by **ourselves** ”



# Child Development



Photographer: Mia Baker

## Sunshine House

We believe it's not quantity that matters but quality results that come from working alongside at-risk children. The process can take decades. Awareness Cambodia will never settle for band-aid solutions. Rescue is not an event, it's a process lived out daily within our Child Development Programs.

Awareness Cambodia decision to send the Sunshine House students to private schools last year has seen a large increase in passion for learning and a noticeable improvement in general demeanour and behaviour of our students. The challenge of transporting 50+ students to schools some distance from Sunshine House took a giant leap forward with the arrival of a new bus courtesy of Linden Family Foundation in the US.

Sunshine House kitchen had a long overdue renovation this year, along with installation of new toilets in the boy's upstairs dorms, a new incinerator, new window awnings on the education wing and a new roof to the kitchen as well as a makeover of the mini staff hut. Deteriorating signage at Sunshine House was replaced. In a province where our 100,000 litre water tank can be filled with roof water in 3 days, drainage is an issue. Work is underway now to do a complete



revision of the plumbing and drainage at Sunshine House. Our desire is that installation be completed by September 2015. This will be a major undertaking and funds will be sought.

A professional dance trainer from the Department of Culture and Arts was employed to train our children in Khmer Dancing. The traditional dances studied were the Coconut Dance, Fishing Dance and Blessing Dance. Both boys and girls completed the 7 month course and finished with a gala performance at the Graduation House opening.

## Update on Makara:

### THEN



We have had a lot of enquiries asking how Makara one of our youngest at Sunshine House is progressing. He was born on the 7th January 2011. When he came to us at just seven months old, he suffered from malnourishment, a zinc deficiency, pneumonia and an enlarged heart. We were concerned that his mental capacity had been affected due to malnourishment, and were told by doctors that he may not survive.

### NOW



Makara received extensive medical treatment and daily physiotherapy and slowly recovered. When this sad, sick little baby was rescued he was weeks from certain death. Today he is full of life and wonder. Should you ever visit Sunshine House our 'little rock star' will be the first to say hello and flash his awesome smile. Makara charisma is tangible and a passion for life flows from him. Your partnership allows Awareness Cambodia to rescue lives just like Makara and we thank you!

## House of Progress

Securing and retaining suitably qualified staff for projects in provincial Cambodia remains a challenge. This year Sovann replaced Vanna after 3 years in the House of Progress manager's role.

Challenges this year has been a deteriorating rural Government School system. With limited funding the Government has primarily put its resources into the capital. A shock for the whole of Cambodia was the 70% failure rate of year 12 students. Only 30% of students across Cambodia actually graduated high school.

As we saw the emerging schooling issues in rural Cambodia develop, Awareness Cambodia made the decision to transfer our students to private schools. Years 1 to 10 enjoy the benefits of placement in private school education. But unfortunately there are no private schools running years 11 and 12 in Kompong Speu. With our ten year lease on the current House of Progress coming to an end, we are considering what changes can be implemented to address the needs of high school senior students.

## Graduation House

2014 was a milestone year in Awareness Cambodia's development. Nearly 4 years in the making Awareness Cambodia now has a multimillion dollar complex in the capital Phnom Penh, totally debt free.

This state-of-the-art facility for orphaned students, the biggest of its kind in Cambodia, launched in Phnom Penh on the 7th September 2014.

Graduation House was officially opened by Cambodia's Secretary of State of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation, His Excellency Nim Thoth. The event was attended by dignitaries from around the world, including representatives of the Cambodian and Australian governments, corporate and not-for-profit sectors, business and community leaders. Simon Fellows First Secretary and Deputy Head of Mission Australia read a letter of support from our Australian Foreign Minister, the Honourable Julie Bishop.

Graduation House complex supplies Awareness Cambodia with a secure, stable rent free administration and a training hub in Phnom Penh. It continues to provide

housing and specialised support to help tertiary students without families, to complete university and vocational training.

Many of the students have grown through our sequential child development projects at Sunshine House and House of Progress.

Graduation House represents a significant shift in the typical child development paradigm and is based largely on one simple thought; FREEDOM without a future is just another form of slavery. Cambodia's children are just as entitled to dream of a professional career as Australian and American kids are; one that goes beyond the options currently on offer through many child development agencies in the beautiful country of Cambodia.

A highlight were this year's graduates; Chumrarn graduating as a Civil Engineer and Somphos with a degree in Economics. We recollect 2 small figures entering Sunshine House in the year 2000 with very little schooling. Awareness Cambodia is so proud to have raised such strong, impassioned young leaders, determined to make theirs a better generation.

## OUR GRADUATES

Where are they today?

A report on Graduation House wouldn't be complete without mentioning that Sok Chan our first graduate in Accountancy was married in March this year. Vanna a design graduate was married to her Italian fiancé Jeremy in September and Chumroeun and his wife Thida who he married in 2012, are expecting their first child, a boy, in February 2015. We're very proud of them all!





# OPENING

## Graduation House





# Education Programs

"Awareness Cambodia is helping to re-write Cambodia's future!"

Our Education programs continue to transform lives and futures. Whether it's our ESL program, Case for Change or our rural Scholarship programs, the gift of education to marginalised children offers a chance at escaping the shackles of generational poverty. Awareness Cambodia believes an educated community can bring help bring about powerful social and economic change.

## Scholarship Programs

Our inaugural Scholarship program got underway in 2014 by identifying 4 gifted rural students. And what an incredibly successful beginning it's been!



The scholarship program is a significant step forward in seeing Cambodia's heart, dignity and opportunity effectively restored as Awareness Cambodia plays it part in filling the education vacuum left behind by civil war, invasion and AIDS.

The program is offered to underprivileged rural students who show academic excellence. Scholarships are on offer in both agriculture and medicine. Students receive a large portion

of university fees and also a nurturing home within the Graduation House program. The successful Graduation House program is an important component in assisting rural children coming to Phnom Penh to study.

We thank Tim Purcell Cambodia Scholarship Fund and Australian medical professionals who have funded our first year; agriculture and medical scholarship students.

## Medicine scholarships

Malinda and Nita have completed their first year of medical studies. They have performed well across their subjects with A's and B+s in most subjects.

Our Graduation House Manager and Senior Operation Nightingale Dr Chenda have discussed the results with both students and their parents. It also seems both students are keen to do extra study in French as this forms part of the curriculum over coming semesters.



Prof John Maloney (ex -Vice Chancellor Curtin University) who has been involved in setting up a number of overseas medical programs and institutions, will begin working with Awareness Cambodia in 2015 to develop and promote the medical scholarship program in Cambodia and liaise on our behalf in Australia.

Below is a letter that Malinda wrote as a thank you, with this calibre of student coming through our scholarship program - we believe Cambodia is in safe hands in the years to come.

*Dear sir / madam*

*I am Malinda. I am sending you an email to tell you how happy I am. I want to give you deep thanks for providing me scholarship and making my life very priceless.*

*I was both surprised and honored to receive scholarship from you. I am aware of the things you do for our community with Awareness Cambodia, particularly in support for education*

*I appreciate your confidence in me and willingness to contribute to my future education. I am transferring from Kompong Speu high school and looking forward to completing my doctorate degree at International University. At the current time, I plan to majoring in medicine in hope of one day opening my own clinic. As anyone attending the college knows, cost fees, books and materials and living expenses are daunting. The scholarship received from you was essential helping me achieve my goal. Again, thank you for investing in my future and your generosity.*

*Respectfully*



## Agriculture Scholarships

Both of our agriculture students (Vorleak and Skarin) have completed their 1st year successfully and performed well across all subjects. It's been a promising start for our scholarship students and program.

Education transforms lives, dreams, and futures.  
A scholarship can break the cycle of poverty.

## English Second Language Primary Schools (ESLPS)

We continue partnering with the Cambodian Government to teach English Second Language in Primary Government schools. Awareness Cambodia provides teachers with text books, resources and training. This program operates as a partnership between Awareness Cambodia, The Kompong Speu Education Department and the community.



In 2014 we welcomed Tang Hout into the role of ESLPS coordinator. He continues working with the Kompong Speu Provincial Education Department to progress the English education process in Government schools. The program also targets English teachers as well as students in years 4, 5 and 6. It reaches many hundreds of primary school

students at four government schools.

Monthly staff capacity building sessions are run by our coordinator Hout to aid our teachers with fresh and innovative ideas. The feedback from parents and students is that the ESL program is extremely beneficial to the Kampong Speu community. Parents recognising the benefit the program is bringing have now volunteered to purchase their student textbooks.

The Provincial Government Department of Education Youth and Sports - Kampong Speu continues promoting our ESL project within the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport. They have invited Awareness Cambodia to expand the program within Cambodian Government schools. Awareness Cambodia has the capacity to do this but needs to secure funding before moving forward.



## Case for Change

For every \$15.00 donated we are able to purchase a school backpack, fill with school supplies and place your school or (business) logo on the front of the backpack.

Since the program's launch in 2008 close to 5000 backpacks have been distributed to local government Cambodian primary schools. These particular schools also participate in Awareness Cambodia's English Second Language for Primary Schools (ESLPS) program as part of Awareness Cambodia's holistic education strategy.



Case for Change is a highlight not only for the students receiving new school bags and supplies, but also for our staff.

## Medical stream

### Operation Nightingale

The Operation Nightingale program expanded from four to seven health clinics over 2014. Operation Nightingale now provides 3,500 rural Cambodian villagers with primary medical care – approximately 50 per cent are children.

An additional 1,000 patients are seen at rural mobile medical clinics. Accessing good health care is often difficult for these patients as they are impoverished and can't afford to travel.



*A recent example was an elderly lady who waited all day to see a doctor on a September rural clinic. At the end of the day a quick triage was undertaken to identify "must see" patients. She had broken her arm a few days earlier and couldn't afford to travel for help. Our medicos*

*were able to plaster her arm, administer pain relief and make her comfortable.*

At the beginning of 2014 we employed a full time doctor/coordinator. Dr Chenda has slotted perfectly into her new fulltime role. Her arrival has also opened new opportunities for Awareness Cambodia to address the needs of the poor in provincial Cambodia.



Above: Cambodian & Australian medical team

## Coming initiative:

The incident of breast and cervical cancer in Cambodia is a major issue, and leading two causes of death for Cambodian women. Around 1,500 new cases of cervical cancer alone present each year in Cambodia – the highest incidence per capita in South East Asia. Provincial women have limited access to medical services, health education and disproportionate financial burden. Unfortunately in Cambodia, almost half of the women presented are too late to cure, resulting in their death.

Awareness Cambodia is looking to combat these devastating, but preventable diseases and will be commencing a pilot programme; for early detection of breast and cervical cancer. It will deliver disempowered impoverished rural women a right that many take for granted; the early detection and treatment of cervical and breast cancer.

The initial program will see a group of 1,440 rural women, aged 17 and 65, go through screening and education over two years at existing Operation Nightingale clinics. The program aims to increase awareness and increase early detection rates in order to reduce the death toll from breast and cervical cancer. Currently we are seeking funding to begin this vital women's health initiative.

# Country profiles

## USA - Awareness Cambodia

**Russ and Janet Landreth**  
USA Co-ordinators

2014 was an exciting year for Awareness Cambodia USA! We enjoyed the opportunity to host our founders, Dr Gary and Kim Hewett in May. Gary and Kim undertook a speaking circuit raising awareness around the work and projects of Awareness Cambodia.

We also held our inaugural fundraising banquet at the beautiful Salt Creek Grill Restaurant with Dr Gary as our keynote speaker. The event was packed to capacity with 150 people in attendance. It was a wonderful opportunity to raise funds and spread the mission of Awareness Cambodia.

In early September we gathered our USA team and crossed from the western hemisphere into the eastern to help celebrate the grand opening of Graduation House. Janet and I were particularly thrilled to be a part of this milestone as we had walked the plotted land many years earlier. At the time it was an overgrown jungle with 2 gravestones and one large swamp. Fiery red ants were at war with our feet. Janet and I, Gary and Kim walked the land together. With no benefactor or grant to fund the dream we discussed the many challenges ahead.

You could imagine our joy when we attended the opening many years later. A testament to what can be achieved by committed people who bind to a cause that is bigger than themselves.



## Cambodia

**Sopheak Pheng**  
Cambodian Projects Director

Here at the coalface our team continues to push forward and improve our projects by offering hope and opportunity. We understand that it is in partnering with the community, Cambodian Government and fellow aid agencies that synergy is best achieved. I'd particularly like to thank Global Development Group whom we partner with in country. The office team particularly enjoys the GDG network meetings where we gain so much from the training workshops and interacting with our fellow GDG partners.



The Phnom Penh office team's efforts in preparation for the Graduation House opening, was outstanding. They performed the opening duties whilst welcoming a number of teams and international guests.

The Phnom Penh office is also about to welcome a new staff member in a Senior Cambodian Consultant's role. He has decades of experience in management with large International NGOs in Cambodia and will be a timely addition to the Central Office team.



Late November we moved into our new office block. It's a modern complex with 2 floors of office space and a floor dedicated to a training room. It's a delightful office block and importantly, we have room to grow.

I trust that after reading the 2014 Overview that you will agree with me; you're partnering with Awareness Cambodia is well placed. I urge you to take a closer look at Awareness Cambodia. Our needs are still significant as we continue to work in impoverished areas. Our mission of rescuing, healing and educating the most vulnerable is at the forefront of what we do.

**Australia**  
Kim Hewett

The Perth office plays an important component in raising funds to continue Awareness Cambodia's vital work. With Gary and I out of the Bayswater office much of the year; Charmaine Taylor (Office Manager) has proved a capable, hardworking, energetic and reliable addition to our Australian fundraising arm.

Our dedicated volunteer team is growing under Charmaine's capable leadership and it's heartening to see so many volunteers giving of their time and skills.

In another confirmation of goodwill, Mills Wilson Communication has agreed to continue providing their PR services pro bono. Awareness Cambodia doesn't have the time, funds or expertise to manage our communications the way Mills Wilson can.

Last month Operation Nightingale secured a donation for a new 4 wheel drive and running costs for 2 years from the WEN Giving Foundation. Mills Wilson Communication Consultants again played a significant part in our submission. We thank both Perth businesses, who are helping Awareness Cambodia get about the task of rescuing, healing and educating the most vulnerable.

## Highlights for the Australian office 2014

- An invitation only, fundraising breakfast with John Worsfold. It was a brilliant morning with substantial funds raised to help fund the Graduation House complex.
- A team of doctors and nurses travelled from Australia to Cambodia to treat over 1000 patients.
- Perth College celebrated its 10th year of fundraising and volunteering at Sunshine House.
- Our first Aboriginal school CAPS came to Sunshine House and brightened many lives.
- Swan Trades Team once again solved some tricky maintenance issues at Sunshine House.
- Case for Change provided over 1200 backpacks and school supplies to 3 primary schools in Cambodia. We sincerely thank Australian businesses and schools who each year get behind this important education project and provide school supplies for the rural poor.
- Finally the completion of our biggest building project undertaken by Awareness Cambodia. David Phipps a retired Australian engineer, an Oxford senior management graduate flew to Cambodia repeatedly over the last year (at his own expense) to build a close working relationship with Ratha the Graduation House Builder and architect. His oversight ensured the Graduation House complex was a solid and durable build. David also co-ordinated a team of Australian building professionals to fly into Cambodia to oversee pivotal parts of the build.

It was a significant year for our Perth office. We sincerely thank each supporter and volunteer who has partnered with us. It's together that we change the lives of the infirmed, orphaned and the poor.

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