

# OUR JOURNEY

Child Development | Medical | Education Programs

## overview 2016



Awareness Cambodia is proud to be a partner for Projects J515 and J675 with Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993), an Australian NGO approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to carry out quality humanitarian projects with approved partners and provide aid to relieve poverty and provide long term solutions. Global Development Group takes responsibility of the project according to OAGDS guidelines providing a governance role and assisting in the areas of planning, monitoring, evaluating and auditing to ensure the projects are carried out to OAGDS 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 project are overfunded, funds may be applied to other approved project activities.

# A Message from Awareness Cambodia's CEO

I'm convinced if you don't like the way the world is, you change it.

We've celebrated a number of milestones in recent years: 2014 saw the Graduation House building completed; 2015 marked 20 years since Awareness Cambodia's inception; and 2016 heralded a decade of delivering primary health care to thousands of provincial Cambodians who could otherwise never afford it. Our 2016 Overview provides a summary of some of our remarkable achievements. This year was also a significant one in our continued realignment of services in Cambodia to meet the evolving needs of the community.



After much discussion, our memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the various in-country ministries have been adjusted and signed to reflect a growing emphasis on community involvement within our child development and education programs.

Our networks are expanding. And we are delighted that we signed a much-coveted MOU with Cho Ray Hospital – the largest private hospital in Phnom Penh. The signing was even broadcast on Cambodian national TV!

In 2017 we will welcome a number of Australian expats into our Cambodian team to provide invaluable input into our services. I'm convinced these Australian couples will help Awareness Cambodia develop existing programs and an even stronger in-country presence.

I want to give a huge thank you to everyone who has stepped up over the last year. Your kindness, thoughtfulness and continued willingness to help in changing lives is truly appreciated.

As a result of your support and selfless giving, Cambodian children can now rebuild their lives in a safe and loving environment and realise their potential to become leaders in an ever-changing Cambodia.

**Dr Gary Hewett** | CEO | Founder

# Education

When asked about Awareness Cambodia's main focus over the last 20 years, one area stands out – education.

In 1995 when Awareness Cambodia was birthed, Cambodia was a picture of poverty, chaos and absolute devastation left behind by Pol Pot's regime. In the 1970s, the Khmer Rouge systematically wiped out 25 per cent of the population, with a specific target on the most educated in their nation (as they were seen to pose a threat to the revolution). Pol Pot's social engineering policies had a catastrophic impact on future generations, especially when it came to education (teachers and academics were executed, the school syllabus focussed on only the most basic of literacy and numeracy with an emphasis on farming skills, and critical thought was forbidden).

Seeing first-hand how the Cambodian people had suffered through a lack of education, which negatively impacted every aspect of their lives and curtailed their dreams for a better future, Awareness Cambodia decided to help fill that education vacuum.

**Since then, education has become the heart of all that is Awareness Cambodia.**



In response to seeing vulnerable young children being exploited, we established the first of our child development projects – Sunshine House – in 2000.

By 2006, House of Progress was up and running. Here students completed their upper high school education, developed life skills and prepared for a tertiary education.

And in 2009 the first group of children to come into our care took the final step in their education journey – moving to Graduation House in Phnom Penh to commence university studies.

Today, the children in our child development programs are joining a growing number of healthy young adults who take up and complete university degrees in fields such as civil engineering, design, architecture, accountancy, tourism and hospitality, medicine, English literature, business and economics.

And our education emphasis doesn't stop there – extending into the Kompong Speu community.

English Second Language courses continue at four government primary schools for children in years 4, 5 and 6, providing them with the essential language skills they will need to take advantage of the high school curriculum. And through our 'Case for Change' program local children are given a backpack and school supplies. While our 'giving' options also take an education focus, allowing generous supporters to provide everything from art supplies to a music teacher to enhance the education journey of underprivileged children.

Recognising the potential education has to alleviate poverty amongst Cambodia's poorest, we introduced a scholarship program to enable students from underprivileged backgrounds to complete medical and agriculture-related studies at university. By taking part in these scholarships, the students develop the capacity to effectively contribute to programs, projects and services that can aid their country's productivity and social development.

All of these programs have been launched with a firm conviction that **EDUCATION** is powerful and a basic human right. It is through education that Cambodia's most vulnerable will be empowered and play a part in the future of their country.

## A Case for Change

### A Case for Change: two days of distributing life-changing education tools

Over 1500 backpacks were distributed to needy children in 2016. That's 1500 children who were helped on their path to education and a better life.

This year's recipients were students in schools that were close to our Operation Nightingale (medical stream) clinics. These were chosen because, during the clinics, Dr Chenda had noted just how poor these schools were: some had sand for their floors; others had no toilets or running water. It was devastating to see such poverty, but encouraging knowing these children were being educated and A Case for Change was playing its part in making that possible.

A Case for Change has given out nearly 10 000 backpacks with school supplies since its inception! A milestone we've reached with the generous support of businesses, schools and groups.

## Empowering a child to help them to realise their dreams

We are also delighted to announce that we had the first Cambodian business and private school in Kompong Speu take part in the program by donating the funds for 300 backpacks. We are so thrilled to work alongside Cambodians who have done well in business and together give a gift of hope through the power of education!

Awareness Cambodia has always placed an emphasis on the importance of education. We believe it enables children to break the cycle of generational poverty and inequity which is seen throughout Cambodia. Just \$15 can purchase education supplies for a child and help empower them to realise their dreams.





# 2016 A Case for Change

## PHOTO GALLERY



**THANK YOU** to the many businesses, schools and private donors who made A Case for Change possible in 2016.

# University Scholarships



In October 2013, we introduced our University Scholarship Program and since then six young rural students have been given the chance to pursue their dreams of university education.

The scholarships program is designed to enable students from underprivileged

backgrounds, who show academic excellence, to study at university. The program has been an incredible success so far, with students taking up studies in medicine and agriculture. The scholarships provide a real lifeline for young people to chase their dreams and empower themselves through education.

Our current medical scholars are now moving into their fourth year and studying with diligence. As the students are advancing through their study years, Australian medical specialists are now being invited to join Dr Chenda in providing mentoring support.

Both of our inaugural agricultural scholarship girls are now in their fourth year studying at the Royal University of Agriculture. Our newest scholarship student, Sokonthearoet, has enjoyed her first year at university and living at Graduation House.

Our students are supported in their education journey with the understanding that once they have achieved their qualification, they will 'pay it forward' and use their skills to benefit their community.

There are a number of academically gifted children in rural Cambodia who would benefit from being a recipient of a scholarship – and we are committed to delivering this life-changing scholarship program.

Education creates opportunities  
and gives hope for a brighter future



# THE POWER OF EDUCATION IN ACTION

## Lork's story



Lork comes from a family of six brothers and sisters. Lork's mum died when he was young,

leaving his father – a farmer who has struggled physically since losing his left arm during the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror – to raise the children.

After remarrying, Lork's dad started a new family. As is common in Cambodia, the children of the first wife or husband are often not welcome in the new family. Lork and his siblings struggled to survive and they were forced to leave their homeland to find work so that they could continue their studies.

As a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, Lork remembers being asked: What is your dream? Without hesitation he declared: "I want to be a doctor". He successfully passed his lower school exams but had no way of being able to continue to study in high school. Lork decided to move to Siem Reap, as he had heard it had a good government school and he was sure he could find employment to support himself while he studied in upper school. Fortunately he found a job where he could work half a day and continue his high school studies in the

afternoons. Lork was alone during this time and was lonely, but he studied hard – always striving towards his dream to study medicine.

Due to his diligence he was rewarded by coming first in his class and being named one of the top students for mathematics and chemistry in his province. Two months later he passed the national examination for medical school entrance in Phnom Penh. With more than 4000 applicants and only 360 being selected, Lork's selection meant his dream was about to begin.

In January 2016, Lork was awarded an Awareness Cambodia scholarship, which provides his tuition fees, a nurturing home at Graduation House and food to eat. Today Lork is in his fourth year studying medicine at the University of Health Science in Phnom Penh and is incredibly grateful to Awareness Cambodia for making this dream come true.

Lork is loved by all and is a delight to have around Graduation House, where he is thriving. He volunteers at local hospitals and is always helping the other students. When he graduates in 2021 he plans to give back to the community by working within Operation Nightingale for a few years.

## Skorin's story



Skorin comes from Kampong Chhnang (a small province 91km from Phnom Penh) and has two sisters and three brothers.

In high school, Skorin studied hard and was rewarded with good grades. Passionate about planting trees, while studying biology at school she decided she wanted to continue to learn more about plants and their uses in agriculture.

Unfortunately her parents couldn't afford to send her to university to follow her dream of studying agronomy. But she heard about Awareness Cambodia's scholarships and knew this was her opportunity.

Skorin's parents were overjoyed when she was awarded her scholarship and she has been working diligently for the last three years to make them proud.

When asked what she loves most about living at Graduation House, Skorin said returning from university after a long day and enjoying a home-cooked meal. Living at Graduation House has made moving from the province to the 'big city' a smooth transition and she appreciates having the freedom to study whilst enjoying the care and support of those around her.

Skorin is doing exceptionally well at university and recently won an internship in her faculty (Agronomy).

The two hotly-contested positions were sought by over 200 applicants and Skorin was absolutely thrilled to win a placement.

The internship is provided by Group for the Environment Renewable Energy and Solidarity (GERES) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF). As part of a Cambodian Government program - 'Increasing Resilience to Climate Change for Farmers in Rural Cambodia' - the internship will see the students join MAFF staff (under the guidance of GERES) undertaking diagnostic field work on participatory climate vulnerabilities modelling and simulation.

Skorin was excited to commence her fourth year of study in September. With only a year left of university, she is looking to her future. Skorin would like to own a big farm with fields of mangoes and durian.

Receiving the scholarship has really changed her life. In her own words: "I'm living a life that I know so many Cambodians would only be able to dream about - because I was one of them only three short years ago".

### 'Pay it forward'

It's bright, passionate students like Lork and Skorin that Awareness Cambodia wants to give the gift of a university education to.

## Empowering young people through education



# English Second Language Project

Awareness Cambodia's education programs are in place at a number of government schools in Kompong Speu. Our staff continue to work with the Provincial Education Department to progress the teaching of the English language within Kompong Speu. Students need English language skills so that they can take advantage of the high school curriculum. Our English Second Language program provides English teachers and resources for students in years 4, 5 and 6. The program is seeing 550 primary school students at four government schools taking part in English classes.

The students in these classes are loving learning and enjoy the vibrant and exciting curriculum we offer. Awareness Cambodia understands that education is not a panacea for solving poverty, but we do have confidence it can and does offer gateway to escape generational poverty.

This year, we received a letter of appreciation from a parent of a child in the program, which was incredibly encouraging and reinforced our commitment to our education ethos.

## Letter of Appreciation *from* a Cambodian parent



Dear Awareness Cambodia,

My name is Heng Heu and my name is Kong Chan living at Chamkar Veal Village, Kraing Ompel Commune, Somrong Torng, Kompong Speu Province. We are the parents of student namely **Heng Chansocheata** who is studying grade 4 in Komnol Primary High School.

We really thank to Awareness Cambodia that helps to donate both budget in English project and stationery for my children in which it is the huge part of helping education system in Cambodia and especially helping the children in Komnol Primary School.

May Awareness Cambodia with the prosperity and get success in all works and projects and wish the ACI good health with the four blessing.

Highly esteem from us.

Chamkarveal & Heng Heu

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016

# Child Development

## Sunshine House

Sunshine House was built in 2000 and the waste water system installed at the time is simply coming to the end of its useful life.

We have four main areas to address: rain water/potable drinking water; bore water; septic/sewerage; and safely dealing with black and grey water. The leach drains built at each accommodation block are not effective due to the heavy soils on the site creating a strong potential for storm water and underground water contamination. As a result, we are undertaking a major revamp of the Sunshine House 'village' water systems. We believe this major overhaul will set us up for a trouble-free future.

With that in mind, at the end of the last financial year, the Awareness Cambodia team put out a call to raise \$70,000 towards a much-needed upgrade to the waste water system.

**Through your extreme generosity our target was reached!**

The 2016 impact team undertook seven days' of intense work on the project, with a massive input from volunteer tradies and an engineer from Australia. Perth plumber, Keith spent four weeks overseeing Cambodian tradespeople complete stages 2 and 3 of the project. It's been a massive undertaking and without the support of fellow Australian volunteers we couldn't have achieved what we did – our heartfelt thanks to those who volunteered labour and expertise.



**Figure 1: Engineers and CEO in a planning meeting**



**Figure 2: Hundreds of meters of new pipes installed**

## House of Progress & Graduation House

House of Progress and Graduation House continue their march forward. This year another four students graduated university: three with well-earned tourism and hospitality degrees and Srey Sroh graduated with an economics degree. One of our graduates who warrants special mention is Srey Mao. Overcoming challenges associated with ill health and a form of dyslexia, she proudly completed her hospitality and catering certificate this year and finds herself with full-time employment in the industry. All graduates have moved into the community, have taken up employment and are doing well.

House of Progress students who were living at Graduation House have completed their high school studies and are now a part of the Graduation House program. Students have begun their university degrees and vocational training. Our congratulations to them all!

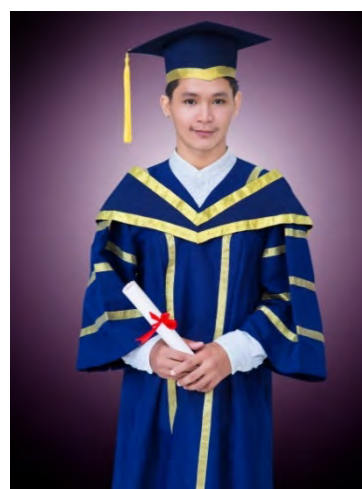
We are incredibly proud of our eight Sunshine House students who passed their upper high school entrance exam and are now continuing their education journey. These students continue to live at Sunshine House but have moved into our House of Progress program. Fortunately the local private school is offering upper high school classes, so the students can stay in the Kompong Speu area.

A number of our university students were recognised as top of their class, passed subjects when almost their entire class failed, secured academic internships competing against hundreds of their peers and recent graduates are now married and starting families of their own. We couldn't be prouder of their achievements.

**We Rescue      We Restore      We Protect      We Empower**  
**We Educate**



**Figure 3: Tourism and hospitality graduates from Western University**



**Figure 4: Architecture graduate from Norton University**

**Congratulations** to our **2016 House of Progress graduates**, who have now moved into the Graduation House program. We are incredibly proud of each student and their development.

### Vocational Training courses



**PHAN Sopheak:** Car Air-conditioning: Institute of Automotive Technology



**SAEM Thon:** Hairdressing Certificate



**POT Theara:** Car Mechanic: Institute of Automotive Technology

### University students



**HENG Phanith:** Architecture: Norton University

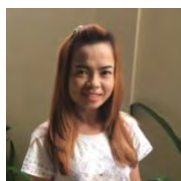


**KITH Samrith:** Civil Engineering: Norton University

Below are students who 'flew the nest' in 2016. Watching them develop from childhood to taking their place in Cambodian society has filled us with so much pride. These amazing young adults have moved into the community and are becoming the future leaders that Cambodia so desperately needs.



Srey Leak



Srey Mieh



Srey Mao



Dalin



Srey Sroh



Srey Tay



Ro



Sokunthea



Kayla

Success | Achievement | Triumph | Accomplishment



# Medical Stream

## Operation Nightingale



**Figure 5: 2016 International Medical Team Volunteers**

Operation Nightingale provides 3500 rural Cambodian villagers with primary medical care at seven clinics. It also provides women's health screening services while educating them in the prevention of breast and cervical cancer.

An additional 1000 patients were seen at rural mobile medical clinics this year. These clinics are run by volunteer Australian medical professionals, comprising doctors and nurses. The annual two-week program visits the medical centres (where the volunteers also help to up-skill the local

practitioners) and travels out to rural areas to provide much-needed medical care.

### Growing issue of cancer

The incident of breast and cervical cancer in Cambodia is a major issue, and are the leading two causes of death for Cambodian women. Around 1500 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed each year – the highest incidence in South East Asia. A report by Dr Eav Sokha, the head of oncology at Cambodian-Russian Friendship Hospital, indicates that 24 per cent of Cambodian women will develop cervical cancer in their life time. The World Health Organization estimates cervical cancer will be in the top four causes of death by 2030.

Several studies indicate the poor and marginalised use 30 to 50 per cent of their income on health care. Mothers also play a significant role in the health and well-being of the provincial Cambodian family.

### Awareness Cambodia's solution

Awareness Cambodia has begun the process to combat these devastating, but often treatable diseases, by dedicating an *Operation Nightingale* program to early detection. So far 500 rural women have taken part in the women's health screening pilot program. It is proving to be vital and life-saving, with around 10 per cent of women undergoing screening being referred for further investigation and treatment.

### This early intervention and education is saving lives.

Increasing awareness and early detection is being addressed over two dedicated days per month at three centres and is soon to be expanded to a fourth centre.

The program is overseen by Dr Chenda Lim MD, MHID (Master Degree in Public Health from Flinder's University South Australia in 2013.)

Practical issues in provincial Cambodia have added obstacles such as women working long hours six days a week in garment factories. Moving sessions to Sundays has proved a success with women now attending in increasing numbers.



**Figure 6: Dr Chenda with an Operation Nightingale patient**

## Kids get a kick out of West Coast Eagles' donation



The West Coast Eagles are no strangers to Sunshine House, having visited in 2010, 2012 and November 2015. So when news came that the team and on-field apparel sponsor Puma were sending a gift, the kids were overjoyed.

The arrival of 80 pairs of shoes was met with excitement and appreciation.

Strapping on the football boots and running shoes, the kids couldn't wait to try them out by copying the moves of their hero footballers!

Eagle Mark Hutchings visited Sunshine House in 2015 and was thrilled to hear of the club and Puma's donation.

"Visiting Cambodia was a life-changing experience," Hutchings said. "The kids at Sunshine House don't have much and will love these boots. It's great that Puma could help out. They will certainly put plenty of smiles on faces."

## Funding

### Hope Giver – monthly sponsorship



Our Hope Giver partnership program enables individuals and corporates to make monthly financial contributions to the work of Awareness Cambodia. It is convenient, efficient, **tax-deductible** and, importantly, helps us to budget.

Over 2016 we invited our supporters to tell friends and work colleagues of the life-changing work being done by Awareness Cambodia. With much gratitude we saw 15% growth in our monthly giving program.

Along with this report we have included a Hope Giver brochure. We'd love it if you could pass it to a friend or associate who is seeking a life-changing charity to support.

# Sustainability

"If we take a moment, I believe each of us in some way wants to know someone else's load is lighter because of us. I don't want to leave planet earth the way I found it.

That means doing things in a way that lasts, which is why we believe sustainability is best addressed by understanding what really matters in any culture – People."

CEO – Dr Gary Hewett

## Cambodia's people are the heartbeat and future of their nation

Awareness Cambodia invests in the ongoing education of local doctors by partnering with the Cambodian Health Department to educate and train their staff.

For 10 years our CEO, Dr Gary Hewett, has used the principle of "love your neighbour" to underpin care-giving amongst a number of Operation Nightingale's senior doctors. It's a philosophy that has taken hold. In 2014, two of our doctors met up with an old classmate, who just happens to be the youngest son of the current Prime Minister, and formed the first Cambodian Medical Alumni. The association now has 2300+ Cambodian doctors and specialists involved. Over 350 medicos travel into remote areas twice a month to provide free medical care and follow-up surgery in Phnom Penh. Gary serves on the association's board.

It has been amazing to see Cambodian doctors "pay it forward" and it bodes so well for the future of healthcare in Cambodia.

## Sustainability is investing in people, not just programs





Volunteers and pro bono professional services keep Awareness Cambodia cost effective and responsive. We avoid unnecessary administration. Our sincere thanks goes to the businesses who support us with pro bono services (accountant, auditor, lawyer, public relations, professional photographers, computer IT specialists, consultants and graphic designers). Their generosity allows us to use your generous donations to provide services in Cambodia, where it is most needed.

Special thanks to GDG, which provide an incredible support and ensure we are Australian Government compliant.

We sincerely appreciate the Tim Purcell Scholarship fund for its support of our three agricultural students. We are grateful for your partnership!

To our Perth and USA offices, who raise funds, thank you. These hubs form the fundraising arms that make what we do in Cambodia possible. Charmaine Taylor, Russ and Janet Landreth and the many volunteers who work in our fundraising offices – you're incredibly reliable, capable, hardworking and energetic. From each Cambodian who benefits from your hard work, thank you!

Special thanks also go to Mei and the Weng Giving team for their support in funding the breast and cervical cancer screening program. For so many Cambodian women, this health service is proving to be lifesaving.

Finally, and with a heart full of gratitude, we farewell and thank Tim and Trudy James who will move home to Perth in 2017. What started as a commitment for one year plus one has turned into five productive years on-site in Cambodia. We've so enjoyed watching Tim and Trudy's journey as they grew into their roles and the way they took our staff along on that journey. The amazing contributions from this couple will be sorely missed by all.



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