



Awareness Cambodia Newsletter | Edition 2 | 2020

COVID-19 and our response

A global pandemic

A respiratory infection that emerged in China's densely populated manufacturing and transport hub of Wuhan, in December 2019, spread to 196 countries in just three months.

Declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 12 March 2020, to date more than 3,000,000 people have been infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and more than 217,000 have lost their lives.

In Cambodia, the number of infections is currently low (122 as at the end of April) and no deaths have been recorded, but the risks of the virus spreading are high with hundreds under quarantine.

The global pandemic has led to governments around the world implementing measures to try to curb the spread of COVID-19. And it has been no different in Cambodia, where social distancing is being enforced and restrictions are being imposed.

These restrictions have affected our child development projects – Sunshine House in Kampong Speu province and Graduation House in Phnom Penh – as the Cambodian Government ordered the closure of all schools and universities on 16 March 2020.

Our projects

At Awareness Cambodia the safety, health and well-being of our students and staff is our number one priority.

We have activated our emergency response plan to safeguard those in our care.

We have temporarily closed both Sunshine House and Graduation House given the increased risks posed by group living.

There is a security guard on-site at Sunshine House to protect the buildings, while a skeleton staff remains at Graduation House to provide emergency assistance / welfare checks for our students and perform essential administrative

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tasks under the guidance of our in-country director Malinda and CEO Gary via Skype.



Our students

Having spoken with each of our 53 students and explained our response to the pandemic to keep them safe, all have been temporarily removed from our facilities and re-homed.

We ensured each student was given practical information on how to stay safe to limit the spread of COVID-19 outside of our projects before they left our care.

All 38 of our school-age students have been sent to live with extended family or Awareness Cambodia staff members present and past in the provinces, where we believe there is less chance of contracting the coronavirus than in the heavily populated cities or within group living situations.

All adult students have also been urged to take leave from studies and work, and relocate to the provinces.

We have provided the same advice to our staff. The majority of COVID-19 cases in Cambodia have been recorded in the cities (Phnom Pehn, Siem Reap, Battambang, Sihanoukville, Kampong Cham etc).

As the extended families are very poor, we are paying for our students' food and living expenses. **Through the on-going generosity of our donors.**

The medical needs of our students continue to be met with the supply of medications, aids and devices also.

We are ensuring that our students continue to be able to rely on the support of our staff. Each has been provided with contact details and encouraged to keep in touch. Our social worker will also be contacting our students and their families.

Once the COVID-19 threat has passed, we look forward to moving our students back into our care at Sunshine House and Graduation House so they can continue to pursue their education dreams.



Our staff

The flow-on effects of COVID-19 have impacted organisations, governments, businesses, charities and individuals across the world.

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While COVID-19 is a health pandemic, the effect on the global economy has been profound. Sadly, Awareness Cambodia has not been immune from the impacts.

Tough decisions had to be made and we, regrettably, had to make a couple of positions redundant, stand down some employees and only retain a skeleton staff as our services and programs ceased and our non-essential projects were postponed.

They were not actions taken lightly, but we had to think about our long-term sustainability. As the pandemic progresses, we are reviewing the situation. Our mission is to create brighter futures through the power of education. The situation in Cambodia is fluid and planning is currently underway to relocate our older students back to Sunshine House and Graduation House to begin online learning.

Safety for our students and their education are our foremost concerns during these unusual times.



Your support

We understand that these are very trying times, with concerns about health and livelihoods top of mind.

We are grateful for the continued support of our partners, sponsors and donors, whose generosity will help us continue to care for our students through the crisis and into the future.

If you would like to donate online, please visit <https://awarecam-gdg-j515.raisely.com>

Alternatively, please complete the enclosed donation form and return it to us by post or email to: **Awareness Cambodia, PO Box 3040, Bassendean, Western Australia 6942**

Telephone: (08) 9370 1457

Email: cambodia@awarecam.org.au

Stay connected

As a way of keeping you updated in 'real time' on the difference that your donations are making, we regularly post on social media. Stay connected by liking our Facebook and Instagram pages.



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Tax deductible receipts for gifts over \$2 with a preference for project 515 or 675 are issued by the Awareness Cambodia Overseas Aid Fund (ABN 15 815 270 527). If projects are over funded, funds may be applied to other approved project activities. Awareness Cambodia Inc. (ABN 69 234 355 895) partners on these projects with Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993), an Australian DFAT approved NGO.

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