

Creating brighter futures



Awareness Cambodia Newsletter | Edition 4 | 2021

Get techy!

Our students need laptops so they can continue to study online.

Governments around the world have been implementing measures to try to curb the spread of COVID-19. And it has been no different in Cambodia.

The Cambodian Government ordered the closure of all schools and universities on 16 March 2020 and moved to online learning.

More than 18 months later, all educational institutions across the country remain closed and the only way for students to complete their studies is to attend virtual classes.



'COVID-19 has curtailed lots of things – including attending school and university in person.'

Awareness Cambodia has always prioritised education, so the children and young adults in our care have all been encouraged to take advantage of every educational opportunity – from primary school through to vocational and tertiary studies.

And they've seized those opportunities with relish and really apply themselves.

As part of our commitment to providing the best education, we have made sure our students have the resources they need, including internet access, PCs and laptops.

But our laptops are ageing and reaching the end of their useful lives. Some of the units are a decade old and can no longer be repaired (yes, we repair our equipment, not just throw it away!).

So we urgently need to replace the irreparable units. Savy as ever, we have been able to source 10 second-hand laptops that are a couple of years old, which will give us the absolute best bang for our buck!

We've negotiated a good deal for the laptops...we just need to be able to buy them... this where you come in! Can you help us raise the \$8000 we need?

We are grateful for your continued support and it's your generosity that will help us continue to care for our students throughout the pandemic crisis and into the future.

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Complete the enclosed donation form to help our students stay connected to their studies.

Our students and their stories



Chetra as a child

Chetra's counting on a bright future

Orphaned at a young age, Chetra and her brother lived with their grandmother until she became too old to continue raising them.

Wanting to make sure her grandchildren would be safe and cared for after she passed, Chetra's grandmother brought the siblings to Awareness Cambodia. And so Chetra (7 years) and her brother Theara [10 years] joined the Sunshine House family in 2005.

Sixteen years have passed and Chetra has grown into a beautiful 23-year-old ready to chase her dreams. And one of those dreams has always been to be a businesswoman, running her own company.

Chetra made a plan to realise that dream and after graduating year 12 last year she started her foundation year at the Royal University of Law and Economics, majoring in Accountancy.

Chetra believes that by studying Accountancy it will help her to learn how to manage cash flow and budget well so she will be able to build up her own business.

By all accounts, she is doing fabulously! Chetra achieved good results in her first semester and is compounding her success in semester 2.

Dedicated to her studies, Chetra takes time for self-study and puts a lot of effort into her academic work. She rightly calculates that graduating with a degree in Accountancy will set her up well for future success.

After graduating, Chetra plans to gain some experience in the workplace and then venture out on her own, starting her own business.

We're sure we can count on Chetra realising her dream!



Chetra now

What a difference a day makes to Sopheak

With a mother who was very ill before his birth and passed just after, Sopheak was just one day old when he came to Awareness Cambodia.

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We took the baby into our care to give him the best possible start to a life that had begun with tragedy.

For the first few months of his life, Sopheak was looked after by one of our carers in Phnom Penh before he settled into Sunshine House.



Sopheak as a baby

Sadly, his father was also ill and passed away soon after Sopheak's birth.

In the space of a couple of months, the new-born and his elder sister Sophoan had lost both parents – but had found a family with Awareness Cambodia, as Sophoan joined her sibling at Sunshine House after their father's passing.

With the care and support of Awareness Cambodia, Sopheak has grown into a very polite, healthy and strong young man keenly eyeing a career as a chef.

Today Sopheak is living at Graduation House and is studying grade 12. He has adjusted well to online classes and had good results for semester 2 – even scoring an A+ for one of his subjects!

With the National Final Exams for grade 12 taking place in December 2021, Sopheak is studying hard and looking forward to sitting his exams.

From there, Sopheak hopes to carve out a career in the food industry.

Dreaming of becoming a chef, Sopheak wants to cook delicious food.

In preparation, he is getting a lot of hands-on work, helping out in the Graduation House kitchen. Sopheak uses every opportunity to learn from the Graduation House cook.

So when he isn't studying you'll find him in the kitchen preparing food, cleaning vegetables or cooking rice. Outside of the kitchen he also helps with the cleaning and watering the garden.

Sopheak also loves travelling back to Kompong Speu to catch-up and share a meal with his sister, of whom he is very protective.

As Sophoan has severe developmental issues, the happy young woman resides at Sunshine House with her carer.

Despite living apart, Sopheak and Sophoan continue to enjoy a strong bond, one which is nurtured by Awareness Cambodia.

Sopheak is very hopeful of achieving his goals with Awareness Cambodia's support.



Sopheak now

Sopheak's quote: "Thank you, Awareness Cambodia, for providing me with a home, since I was born until now. Thank you for everything that Awareness Cambodia has done for me so far".

See our YouTube channel for videos from Chetra and Sopheak.



www.youtube.com/user/AwarenessCambodia

Thearith's sowing the seeds of success

With a passion for agriculture, Thearith was the perfect candidate for the Graduation House Agricultural Scholarship program.



Hailing from the Kampong Chhnang Province – 91km from Phnom Penh – Thearith grew up knowing the value of farming.

The province's main income is from agriculture and its economic goals centre on poverty reduction and food security.

Thearith came from a low socio-economic household and, most importantly, had a desire for education and learning.

These made her an ideal scholarship recipient and she was accepted into the program in October 2015.

Having completed high school and receiving good grades, it was a delight for Awareness Cambodia to offer Thearith educational sponsorship through “**The Tim Purcell Cambodia Scholarship Fund (TPCSF)**”.

Thearith completed her degree at the Royal University of Agriculture. Ranking number 1 in her classes on more than one occasion, Thearith graduated in 2020 after completing her thesis year.

Her university studies had a strong research focus and after graduating she was quickly snapped up by LN Agri, taking on the role of Assistant Manager at two of the management company's economic land concessions (ELCs) in the remote Kratié Province.

LN Agri said that in remote areas, it is difficult or even impossible to find the caliber of staff you need to run a project. But they lucked out when they met Thearith!

Located in the northeast of Cambodia, Kratié relies heavily on rice paddies, but companies like LN Agri are exploring other agro-industrial crops like red corn, beans, peanuts, soybeans, sesame, tobacco, rubber, cashews, pepper, cassava, bananas and sugarcane.

Given her academic expertise, Thearith's work at the ELCs has been invaluable.

She is the head of cashew research and is also actively involved in rubber research. The main focus of her work is on reducing the use of harmful chemicals to control pests and diseases in cashew and rubber plantations.

Each month her research findings are implemented at the respective ELCs – with great success.

Thearith's work is not only saving the company money but also protecting the crops and increasing productivity.

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Thearith at work

Her employer said that, due to Thearith's expertise, they have been able to stop using two harmful products and have reduced the use of several others.

Thearith was also instrumental in helping the company to reduce the amount of fertiliser used on their plantations without negatively impacting production (average and above-average crops have been achieved).

LN Agri were thrilled when they recruited Thearith (right): "We couldn't find an individual more suitably qualified, with knowledge of cashew nuts and a passion for research. Cashew nuts are a reasonably new crop in Cambodia and it was difficult to find someone with this expertise."

Thearith's story is a testament to the power of education and the good that Awareness Cambodia is helping the upcoming generation to achieve. Long may her success grow!

If you share Awareness Cambodia's belief that real change can be sustained by investing in people, not just in programs, then partner with us to invest in young Cambodian lives. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible in Australia.

If you would like to donate online, please visit <https://accovid19-gdg-j515.raisely.com/>

Alternatively, please complete the enclosed donation form and return it to us by post or email:

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Make your tax-deductible donation today!



Tax deductible receipts for gifts over \$2 with a preference for project 515 or J675 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. Awareness Cambodia Inc (ABN 69 234 355 995) partners on these projects with Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993), an Australian DFAT approved NGO.

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