

Hope through Education



Awareness Cambodia Newsletter | Edition 2 | 2023

Meet Leeda – resourceful and committed, he’s forging a stellar medical career

Leeda Lonh wears his doctor’s coat with incredible pride – and for good reason. His journey into medicine wasn’t easy but his courage and determination – not to mention support from Awareness Cambodia – is paying off.

Now in his sixth year of a medical degree, Leeda is looking forward to following his dream to heal: *“I hope my special gift will help other kids and educate other people. I want to devote my life to Cambodian people and children, helping this country with a better healthcare system.”*

While he is looking ahead, he is also looking back and reflecting on his journey from a rural town to the fast-paced world of practicing medicine in Phnom Penh – a lifelong dream made possible through an Awareness Cambodia medical scholarship...

“I was born in a rural area, far from town. I have four brothers and no sisters. In my area, we don’t have a high school (only grades 1-9), so all students who finish grade 9 are forced to move to small towns to continue their studies.



Many have to travel long distances on bikes or motorbikes to get to the high school. Some quit their studies to do farming or find other jobs.”

Like many rural families, Leeda’s weren’t wealthy but they wanted to support his dream of being a doctor.

“When I was 12, my parents asked me if I wanted to study in a children’s centre in town, so I agreed to live there.

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The centre provided everything to support my studies, including a place to stay, food and classes.

I stayed at the centre until I graduated grade 12. After that, I moved to the capital city of Phnom Penh to find a scholarship to study medicine. I passed my medical school entrance exam and got a scholarship from Awareness Cambodia.

"From the very first year to my last I've been supported by Awareness Cambodia. They have given me a place to stay and nutritious food, as well as extra English classes. All of this helped my family a lot with our financial problems."



Being part of the Awareness Cambodia family and living at Graduation House has also helped Leeda meet the challenges of moving to the capital and adapting to life in the city:

"In my first year of medical school, I studied medical sciences. Life in the city was really challenging and I had to adapt to everything that came into my life."

A medical degree is pretty gruelling by anyone's standards but imagine what it's like when you're studying in a second language.

Leeda's first language was Khmer, with young Cambodians often only getting to learn English as a second language at some schools or in special classes. With Awareness Cambodia's support,

Leeda graduated from a General English class which greatly helped his studies.

"What challenged me the most was studying medical sciences because everything we studied was in English. The second challenge was before and during exams because we had to review every lecture and every subject with an oral exam."

"Despite all the challenges, I've been striving and thriving from year 1 through year 6."

Currently doing his medical internship, Leeda is hoping to complete the final two years interning at country sites: *"After finishing my internship, I want to continue my specialty in Pediatrics and Endocrinology."*

Leeda's extended Awareness Cambodia family has no doubt he will realise his dream and be a leading light in Cambodia's healthcare system in the years ahead.

The final word goes to Leeda: *"I want to thank Awareness Cambodia and their sponsors who always support Cambodian children for a better future."*

Turn It Up!

With the end of the financial year fast-approaching, are you looking for a good cause to support?

Awareness Cambodia has launched a fundraising appeal so that we can complete an overhaul of our water supply system at Graduation House.



Water pressure has always been an issue in Phnom Penh, but the increased demand from ongoing construction works in the city has led to a further drop in water pressure.

This is having an immediate impact in our dormitories and on students' hygiene, in particular on our young women on the second floor. We want to remedy this for the comfort, health and well-being of our students.

A recent review of the plumbing system identified maintenance which can be carried out to improve the in-house water supply, such as replacing old plumbing components. But this won't address the overall problem.

We can't increase the supply and pressure of the water being delivered to the Graduation House mains, but our builders have recommended changes to the existing water system within the complex to compensate.

Initial changes include installing additional pumps and water storage tanks, and inserting non-return valves into the existing piping. Ultimately, Graduation House's water supply system will need a full overhaul to provide a long-term solution.

All support for our **"Turn It Up! Graduation House Water Supply appeal"** gratefully accepted!

HOW TO DONATE

Creating brighter futures - with your generous support.

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://graduationhouse-waterappeal-gdg-j515.raisely.com/>

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

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Tax deductible receipts for gifts over \$2 with a preference for project J515 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).



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