



the foundation for developing
cambodian communities



2018 FDCC Annual Report

This is the tenth annual report for the Foundation for Developing Cambodian Communities Ltd., trading as Cambodian Kids Can (CKC).

What was Achieved in the 2017/18 Year

To all our very committed supporters, your financial contributions continue to serve the CKC beneficiaries in rural Prey Veng who otherwise would more than likely be struggling to make a meaningful contribution to their communities. During this Khmer school year (finishing in August 2018), we had four girls completing year 12, and incredibly, all of them have now started tertiary studies. One of the students pictured below has commenced a law degree in Phnom Penh- the first Mekhala House alumni to enrol in law.



At the time of this report, there were twelve young women studying at university, eight at various Phnom Penh universities and four at Cambodian regional universities. The Phnom Penh based students are residing together at a Team House which is very kindly being funded by the Cambodian Association of Victoria.

The student who had been undertaking a 2-year hospitality course at the premier training institute in Phnom Penh has finished her course and very pleasingly has been offered employment at that training institute.

With your support, the members and supporters of CKC, it is clear to see that the success rate in girls at Mekhala House obtaining university scholarships after completing the national year-12 exams shows they are relishing the opportunity that has been presented to them.

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At Mekhala House, the staff are conscious of the fact that they need to provide a nurturing and caring home environment where the girls can develop into mature, well educated young adults.

CKC has continued to take advantage of the resources and expertise available from other NGO's including M'Lup Russey s and Advanced Centre for Empowerment. This provides the girls with access to various workshops in areas such as self-development, career planning and personal finances.

As part of this focus, the young girls approaching the latter stages of their secondary schooling need to be given adequate guidance on career opportunities, and this includes attending workshops conducted by the National Institute of Education in Phnom Penh as well as visiting tertiary institutions including Passerelles Numeriques Cambodia and Harpswell Foundation.

The other major project we operate in Prey Veng is the Mekhala Learning Centre (MLC).

Unlike Mekhala House which focuses on disadvantaged and 'at risk' young girls, MLC offers free English, Internet and Computer Studies to disadvantaged members of the broader Prey Veng community, having a mix of young men and women. These students, who are often commencing university courses, gain very practical, hands-on experience with computers. It is very often the first time they have actually touched such hardware and used the associated software; such is the paucity of facilities available at government schools and universities.

In addition to these critical subjects, MLC continues to conduct short courses such as CV Preparation, Job Interviewing skills, and Personal Finances, all of which are invaluable to the attending students.

During the year, the eleventh semester was conducted and now 543 students have successfully completed the course.



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The staff at MLC continue to work very closely with the National Employment Agency in Prey Veng. The management at this agency recognise the important skills acquired by students completing an MLC course, resulting in very quick take-up by of these students by local businesses such as micro-finance or telecommunications companies as well as government departments in the area.



MLC also operates a well-resourced library, clearly the largest accessible by Prey Veng residents. On average more than 500 visitors to attend the library, reading more than 1,500 books or undertaking internet-based research on the library laptop computers.

CKC Fundraising

Fundraising proceeds were higher in the year to June 2018, primarily on account of the timing of the annual gala dinner. Two gala dinners were actually held in the fiscal year, one in August 2017 and the second in June 2018.

In recognition of tighter financial circumstances, including a decline in donation revenue and reduced spending power of Australian dollar donations, project expenses were closely controlled resulting in a final operating loss of \$11,395.

However, costs associated with fundraising activities as well as overall Cambodian project expenses were also higher, reflecting the costs of supporting additional young women undertaking tertiary studies, as well as cost escalation as a direct result of weakening of the Australian dollar against the US dollar in which Cambodian expenses are outlaid.



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The main sources of income during this fiscal year included another very successful annual dinner, corporate support from Cooper Investors and VAA, as well as stronger revenue from individuals providing specific financial support to university girls.

The Directors would again most sincerely like to acknowledge the contribution of our volunteers who organise fundraising events for CKC. These efforts enable CKC to continue to be able to provide much needed assistance to the very needy beneficiaries in Cambodia.

Conclusion

This 2017/18 financial year has seen CKC continue to provide education-based assistance to students from poor families who otherwise would most likely miss out on a comprehensive education opportunity. The beneficiaries from both Mekhala House and MLC continue to express their heartfelt gratitude to CKC supporters, recognising that through their personal development, they will be in a sound position to alleviate the poverty that besets their families in a third world country.

The organisation is particularly indebted to the Directors of both FDCC Cambodia and CKC Australia for making this happen, but especially to all the donors and local volunteers who support us in so many varied ways. With ongoing cooperation between Australia and Cambodia, and with everyone's continued enthusiasm and support, we will continue to develop young women who really will become 'change agents' in dragging their impoverished communities slowly out of poverty.

Patrick Arthur
CKC Chairperson