



the foundation for developing  
cambodian communities



## 2019 FDCC Annual Report

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

### What was Achieved in the 2018/19 Year

Once again, we had a very successful year. During this Khmer school year (finishing in August 2019), we had eight Mekhala House girls completing year 12, and incredibly, seven of them have now started tertiary studies.



Whilst the Cambodian education authorities are striving to enhance the quality of government based education, there are still 32% of year-12 students who do not pass the national exams. So, the girls pictured above have done extremely well in passing, and the top three performing students achieved a result that places them in the top 20% of students Cambodia wide.

So now there are fifteen young women undertaking tertiary studies at university. Ten are studying at Phnom Penh universities and five at two other Cambodian regional universities. The Phnom Penh based students are residing together at a Team House which continues to be funded by the Cambodian Association of Victoria.

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

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.

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Registered Address: Unit 11, 41 Murrumbena Road, Murrumbena 3163 Australia

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As part of these efforts, the girls learn traditional Khmer dancing, regularly attend the local pagoda, and are encouraged to undertake volunteer work as needed.



I am also pleased to report that during the year, the Mekhala House girls and staff were invited on an all-expenses paid study tour to Sihanouville courtesy of his excellency Mr Sar Sokha, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport. This was a wonderful experience for our young students and a reminder of how valued our work is in the community.

The other major project we operate in Prey Veng is the Mekhala Learning Centre (MLC) where disadvantaged members of the broader Prey Veng community are offered free six-month studies in English, Computer Studies and Internet. These students, who are often commencing university courses, gain very practical, hands-on experience with computers.



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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 fiscal year, the twelfth semester was conducted and now 598 students have successfully completed the course, of which almost 400 were females; this bias towards educating females is in a small way attempting to address the strong gender bias favouring boys education in Cambodia.

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

### **CKC Fundraising**

Fundraising proceeds were significantly lower in the year to June 2019, primarily on account of the timing of the annual gala dinner. Two gala dinners had been held in the prior fiscal year, including June 2018, whereas the following gala dinner didn't happen until July 2019. This was partially offset by additional donation revenue which includes revenue from those very generous donors who are supporting a student through university.

And the ongoing decline in the spending power of Australian dollar donations again necessitated further trimming of USD project expenses in Cambodia, including non-replacement of students leaving Mekhala House for university. The final operating loss of \$11,071 was consistent with the prior financial year.

The main sources of income during this fiscal year included ongoing corporate support from Cooper Investors, a couple of International Womens Day events, 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 help organise fundraising events for CKC. These efforts enable CKC to continue to be able to provide much needed assistance to the very worthy beneficiaries in Cambodia.

### **Conclusion**

This 2018/19 financial year has seen CKC continue to gain huge satisfaction from the wonderful education outcomes for the Mekhala House students completing year 12 exams, as well as the Mekhala House Alumni who have moved on from Mekhala House to undertake tertiary studies at university level.



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We are constantly reminded of the Mekhala House and Mekhala Learning Centre students who diligently take full advantage of the wonderful opportunity they have been presented with to turn their lives around and become role models in their communities.

The organisation is also particularly indebted to the staff of FDCC Cambodia and directors and volunteers of CKC Australia for making all of this possible,

Patrick Arthur  
CKC Chairperson

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