



the Foundation for developing
cambodian communities

2012 FDCC Annual Report

This is the fourth annual report for the Foundation for Developing Cambodian Communities.

FDCC achievements this year

The past year has seen FDCC continue to grow the organisation and work closely with FDCC in Cambodia to help the underprivileged and orphaned children of Prey Veng in Cambodia.

During the past financial year we have welcomed one new Director of FDCC, Patricia Whitney-Wall and in the week prior to this October AGM, Aaron Lamb has also joined as a Director. Since her appointment Patricia has contributed very actively to the organisation since her appointment. Aaron has been a wonderful supporter of FDCC in the past, and will no doubt bring that passion and enthusiasm with him into his new role as a Director.

It is now twenty-four months since the FDCC Board submitted its application to AusAID to attain DGR status under the Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme. After a period of non progression of our application at AusAID, FDCC has recently received notification from AusAID that it has successfully met all the seven criteria. We now await further news of our submission being forwarded to the Department of Foreign Affairs for further consideration. Attaining DGR status is a major goal of the Directors as we believe it will significantly increase the access to donations for FDCC to support the projects in Cambodia.

During the prior financial year, FDCC had initiated a strategic planning process with the Directors and staff of FDCC Cambodia that has the ultimate aim of handing over much of the visioning and responsibility for the future directions of the projects in Cambodia to FDCC Cambodia. This important step has since translated into a formal five year plan for FDCC Cambodia which is driving their future direction.

I would also particularly like to thank Tony Batsakis of KPMG for his pro bono assistance in auditing FDCC's annual accounts and Joanne Clark for her work in preparing the annual financial report.

FDCC membership drive and fundraising activities

During the year FDCC expanded its membership to 146 members at 30 June 2012 who have assisted in supporting the work to improve the lives of many children in Cambodia. We are grateful to all of our members and supporters as their interest in and support for our activities are essential to allowing FDCC to raise funds for its projects in Cambodia and to operate the organisation in Australia.

In terms of fundraising, FDCC had an excellent year, raising over \$96,000 for Mekhala House which was consistent with the prior year.

FDCC has many regular donors, some who give on a weekly basis, some on a monthly basis and some who provide donations when their circumstances allow. They are all essential to helping provide a sustainable funding base for the organisation. Equally important are the volunteers who organise fundraising events for FDCC. For the Directors, it is gratifying to see so many people willing to support FDCC's work. These people are too numerous to mention, but a big thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time or donated money to ensure FDCC continues to be able to support the work in Cambodia.

However, I would also like to thank FDCC Director Marie O'Sullivan and her dedicated team of volunteers who together organised the annual fundraising dinner in June 2012. The event was held again at Ascot House in Ascot Vale and was extremely successful with 176 paid guests and with many prizes and auction items made available for the night by way of generous



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donations from supporters. The dinner raised over \$33,000 which represented a very significant increase on the record prior year result.

And also very importantly, I would like to thank FDCC Director Melani Daruis for again organising the fundraising calendars and also Cambridge University Press for generously printing and publishing the calendars without charge to FDCC. In the past year, \$16,000 was raised from this activity. The girls at Mekhala House again took the photos for the calendar, which had the theme "Faces of Cambodia", and the improving quality of the photos is very evident.

FDCC's main focus is obviously to raise money to fund the work done by its partner organisation in Cambodia and also to provide support to the staff that allows them to carry out their important work in a professional, efficient and effective manner. One of the most pleasing aspects of this work is to see the staff in Cambodia continue to grow and develop in their roles. Their enthusiasm and willingness to learn has greatly benefited both the Mekhala House and Mekhala Learning projects, and we will continue to foster their efforts in assuming more ownership in these projects.

Mekhala House project

All of the children of Mekhala house continue to grow and learn under the care of the committed staff in Prey Veng. They continue to impress with their growing self confidence and general development, especially as they participate in peer to peer development programs. For two of our girls, Theara and Sorey, life after Mekhala House has arrived, and we are delighted to advise that both girls successfully completed year 12, and are now settling into university life at Kom Chay Mea where they will study business and accounting. Significant credit and thanks must go to Sok Rady, the FDCC Executive Director, Phlong Sinath, the FDCC House Mother, and all of the staff for their hard work and dedication in caring for the children.

With support from the Indochina Starfish Foundation the Mekhala Kangaroos soccer team again travelled to Phnom Penh to play in the girls under 15 tournament. The girls again enthusiastically embraced the chance to play competitively and practised regularly in the lead-up. Their commitment and skill paid off when they went through the tournament undefeated, winning the final in a penalty shoot out. This was an amazing effort given they had only formed a team during the previous year and were competing against girls who play regularly in leagues in the larger cities.

Mekhala Learning Centre project

Mekhala Learning Centre continues to provide many underprivileged children in the region with access to learning important computer and English skills. It provides them with access to learning resources for their secondary and tertiary education and also greatly enhances their future employment prospects.

The courses were available to high school children at lunch time and in the evenings. During the day local government workers attended classes. Classes were carried out for students five days per week. The MLC community library, which now houses over 3,800 books and is the largest in Prey Veng, receives up to 600 visitors each month, and is very well patronised.

The feedback from students in both courses to date has been very positive. For this, significant credit and thanks must go to Sok Rady, Thon Setharoth the Manager of Mekhala Learning, and all of the staff for their hard work and dedication in developing such an effective education program for the people of Prey Veng.



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National Australia, Ozescribe and Cooper Investments were the key donors for the Mekhala Learning centre during the past financial year, and FDCC is very grateful to those donors for their generous support.

I would also like to thank Global Development Group for partnering with FDCC on this project. Under the arrangement with GDG, donors to Mekhala Learning are able to make tax-deductible donations.

Conclusion

Finally, to the staff, Directors of FDCC in Cambodia and to everyone on the Board of FDCC Australia – and especially to all our donors and local volunteers who support us in various ways – we should all be very proud of the continued achievements of both projects and also how well both organisations work together. We continue to achieve some wonderful things for the children and people of Prey Veng together.

Patrick Arthur

FDCC Chairperson