

# Youth Star News

March 2015



## In this issue:

- \* Little by Little – by UCH Vannak
- \* 20<sup>th</sup> Cohort of Youth Star Volunteers Placed in the Field
- \* Youth Star Alumni Reunion
- \* Youth Star Attends Inaugural ‘Philanthropreneurship Forum’ in London
- \* Youth Star Commences Second Global Fundraising Campaign

## Little by little – by UCH Vannak



My name is UCH Vannak. I am currently a Youth Star volunteer based in Changkrang Village, Changkrang Commune, Chetborey District, Kratie Province. I have been working there for 6

months. In 2014, I graduated from the Royal University of Phnom Penh in Khmer Literature.

Upon my graduation, I had no idea of how my life should be due to the lack of working experience. I had been wandering around and seeking employment in different places before I found that none of the jobs fit my interests and inspiration. The type of work I wanted was to both develop my personal, professional ability and to contribute to society. Recommended by my sister, Uch Sithea, who used to be a Youth Star volunteer, I have made up my mind without any hesitation to be a volunteer. After 6 months of my service in the community, I could not believe myself how much I have grown. The work practically taught me the basic skills such as work planning, report writing, communications, flexibility and self-confidence. Practically, I mobilize and cooperate with young people in the community to successfully organize International Women’s Day.



*Vannak and his children club are watering vegetable*

In addition, I work closely with the school and community partners to identify the kids who are the slow learners and offer extra classes for them. In the extra class, I play a role as a

teacher to inspire their passion to learn and to solve homework exercises. I also keep track with students’ parents and teachers to see their learning progress. The remarkable change, as reported by school principle, is that most of the slow-learner students start to attend the class regularly and perform better at school. Through all the work, the local people start to build more trust in me and allow me to form a children’s club and vegetable yard. I still remember one day that my bike was deflated by students of mine who wanted to have dinner at their home. Then I had to walk my bike for more than 7 km back home. I was not angry with them yet very happy as I knew they really wanted me to stay. I am so proud that the community values me as an important resource to improve education of children and youth. I have become more confident in myself and communicating with people. I would like to wholeheartedly thank Youth Star Cambodia who provided me such an opportunity to develop my practical experience and bring about positive change in the marginalized communities.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Cohort of Youth Star Volunteers Placed in the Field



We are pleased to announce that our 20<sup>th</sup> cohort of volunteers has been placed in the provinces of Kratie and Prey Veng for their year’s voluntary service.

Our volunteers received their Pre-Departure Training (PDT) in early March and were placed into their new communities on March 18. Like every year our community partners also attended the last week of Pre-Departure Training to learn more about Youth Star’s mission and their responsibilities as our volunteers’ mentors.

Traditionally we send the volunteers off to their exciting new venture with a closing ceremony, which is also attended by Youth Star staff, community partners and Youth Star’s Board Directors. This year the sending off ceremony coincided with the Youth Star Alumni reunion.



*Volunteers are preparing to depart from Youth Star's office*

Cohort 20 will be working with 10 marginalized communities in Prey Veng and Kratie, where they will be implementing programs with our partners. The main focus of these programs is literacy for all and poverty reduction.



*Volunteers meeting with the commune council and community partners*

***“I am thankful to Youth Star for this volunteer opportunity. I could see a lot of issues here in the community. Promoting literacy is my first priority – Ms. Heng Rina, Kratie province.”***

We wish all of our volunteers a fulfilling and successful time with their new communities, families and friends.

### Youth Star Attends Inaugural ‘Philanthropreneurship Forum’ In London

On 13 December 2014 Youth Star’s Executive Director, Mrs Mora Gibbings, attended the inaugural Philanthropreneurship Forum in London. ‘Philanthropreneurship’ is an entrepreneurial approach to philanthropy seeking to deliver meaningful and sustained social change. This approach fits well with the Youth Star mission: ‘to empower Cambodian youth as volunteers, to improve the quality of life in vulnerable communities through education and civic participation.

The Philanthropreneurship Forum was co-convened by the Stars Foundation and London Business School. Youth Star was invited to attend this event through its involvement with the Stars Foundation—in 2012 Youth Star received a Rising Star Award from the Foundation for its positive contribution to the improvement of Cambodian society. The Foundation generously met all of Youth Star’s travel and associated costs in attending the Forum.



*Mrs Mora Gibbings with former US President, Mr. Bill Clinton*

One of the many distinguished speakers at the Forum was former United States President, Mr Bill Clinton, who was presented with the first ever Philanthropreneurship Prize for his groundbreaking work with the Clinton Global Initiative. This work has built a movement that has improved the lives of more than 430 million people in over 180 countries.

Mrs Gibbings was very impressed with the range of initiatives and approaches presented at the Forum that were achieving profound social change. She hopes to adapt some of these approaches to advance the work of Youth Star over the coming months and years, and to use some of the networks established at the Forum to assist Youth Star in its efforts to fulfill its mission.

### Youth Star Commences Second Globalgiving Fundraising Campaign

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 Youth Star commenced its second Globalgiving fundraising campaign. This campaign—Fund 10 Cambodian Graduates to Educate Rural Youth—aims to raise US\$25,000 (just over £15,000). These funds will be sufficient to place 10 graduate volunteers in rural Cambodia in 2015.

In total, Youth Star aims to have 25 volunteers ‘out in the field’ in 2015. If we are able to achieve this goal our office in Phnom Penh will be very busy. The recruitment of volunteers is an extensive process. Youth Star is very careful to choose volunteers that have the appropriate skills, approach and motivation for what can be a very challenging role.

Often the selection of a volunteer also requires close liaison with the volunteer’s parents, who may require convincing that serving as a volunteer is in their child’s long-term interest. Volunteers only receive a small monthly stipend of \$US90 during their placement. We encourage parents and potential volunteers to also liaise with former Youth Star alumni, so they can appreciate the benefits of volunteering to the community in which they serve and to themselves. Over 90% of Youth Star alumni have gone on to full time employment, often in roles that provide ongoing service to the Cambodian community.

All volunteers receive two week’s pre-departure training and return to Phnom Penh for follow-up training of one week’s duration twice during their 12 month placement. Youth Star also periodically visits graduates in their rural placements.

Our longer term aim is to gradually increase the number of volunteer placements on a year by year basis. We will only do this if we are able to provide the level of support each volunteer requires.

If you would like to help fund a volunteer please visit the campaign page on the Globalgiving [website](#).



### Youth Star Alumni Reunion

On Saturday March 14, prior to the departure of Youth Star volunteer group 20, the Alumni Reunion was held. The program was organized to celebrate the successful completion of Pre-Departure Training of Youth Star volunteer Cohort 20, to strengthen existing relationships among the members of Youth Star family (Board of Directors, Youth Star team, former staff, volunteers and partners) and to elect the alumni management team of former Youth Star volunteers. This event coincides with the 10-year anniversary of Youth Star's inception in 2005.



*Youth Star's Board of Directors, staff, community partners and former volunteers (alumni)*

The event marked the first reunion of the Youth Star family. The celebration was exciting as the Founder H.E. Eva Mysliwiec was also present. Our Board of Directors enthusiastically welcomed and thanked the ten new volunteers and local community partners. H.E. Dr. Mengly J. Quach, who has been a member of the board since 2005, delivered some presents for the volunteer group and the partners. He also shared his meaningful advice and recommendation to the volunteer group for their one year service. We are grateful to the Board of Directors who have always been very supportive for the growth of our organization. It was demonstrated that the Youth Star volunteering spirit is strong and lasting as ever.

## Support Us

### Donating to Youth Star Cambodia

Help us to grow Good Citizenship in Cambodia by giving young people an opportunity to serve as volunteers in underserved rural communities. Your donations will support education programs for children and youth in these communities (particularly in literacy and numeracy), the establishment of children's and youth clubs, targeted activities to increase school attendance levels and much more.

At a time of global economic difficulties Youth Star relies more than ever on donations and has an urgent need to raise more funds. The cost of training, supervising and supporting one volunteer alone is US\$3,500 (plus administration costs). Please see our [Get involved](#) section on our website for information on different ways to donate or contact us, including emailing us at

[info@youthstarcambodia.org](mailto:info@youthstarcambodia.org).

Or donating through Globalgiving at:

<http://www.globalgiving.co.uk/projects/fund-10-cambodian-graduates-to-educate-rural-youth/>

### Be Our Corporate Partner

Join the growing number of private sector companies who are investing in Youth Star. As the private sector in Cambodia grows, corporate social responsibility values are gaining attention. Youth Star seeks partners to help us explore solutions to help develop Cambodia and benefit all sectors, including business. Our corporate partners understand that Youth Star offers a unique opportunity to work with an organization that stands out in its professionalism and commitment to excellence.

**Thank you!**