

Our Year at Youth Star Cambodia and Request for Your Support in 2016

Dear Friend of Youth Star

As we draw near to the end of another year and start preparing for our end of year festivities and spending time with friends and family, I thought you might be interested in hearing about our year at Youth Star and the progress we are making. This letter also asks you to consider donating some funds to support Youth Star's work in 2016, as we depend on your support to continue our work with marginalised Cambodian rural communities.



Village children learning English

Our two most important achievements in 2015 have been targeting our work to improve rural educational standards and recruiting many more volunteers to implement our new program. Youth Star currently has 25 volunteers 'out in the field' and they are making great progress.

We recently profiled the inspiring work and life story of one of these volunteers, Mr. CHHEOUN Tola, in a [project report](#) on the Globalgiving website. There is also another [project report](#) describing how we recruited these 25 volunteers and decided which communities they would serve in.

The key focus of our Youth Star volunteers is now to provide and coordinate lessons to raise literacy and numeracy standards. Our volunteers also run educational facilities such as libraries, with support from our partner SIPAR. Youth Star's long-standing approach has been to establish youth clubs in the communities in which we work to develop a local self-help culture and to provide a structure for maintaining our programs after we leave. During the year we realised that to make this approach more effective we needed to introduce children's clubs as well, so that the children in the clubs could go on to influence the culture in their community for many years.



Some of Mr CHHEOUN Tola's students



Youth Star volunteer Ms HIEN Samphors with children in Steung Svay village, Kratie province

Education is the key to improving future employment prospects for village youth, but is not always valued in poor communities. We want village children to stay in school and get the best education possible, so we work with parents in the community to help them understand how an education will assist their children. Our aim is to significantly increase school attendance and the extent to which we achieve this will become one of our key performance measures.

During 2015 we established an important partnership with the international NGO, [Aide et Action](#), who is helping us further our educational goals. We have also just completed a memorandum of understanding with the Cambodian Ministry of Education. This will assist us in recruiting graduate volunteers, selecting appropriate communities in which to place our graduates and in integrating our activities with the formal Cambodian school system. And after almost two years of interaction with the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia we were very happy to receive the GPP certificate (Good Governance & Professional Practices for NGOs in Cambodia) in September, which we hope will assist us in obtaining support from international aid and donor organisations.

It has also been a very busy year for Youth Star in other operational areas. We moved to new premises early in February 2015 and have improved this accommodation throughout the year to improve the staff working environment. In March we held our annual gala in Phnom Penh, which is an important fundraising activity and provides us with an opportunity to showcase our work. The gala theme was the '1960s in Cambodia', a period which most Cambodians look back upon as being a golden age in the development of film, music and culture in our country.

I always feel reluctant to ask Youth Star supporters and friends to donate more funds to support our organisation, but the reality is that without your support we cannot continue our work. Each volunteer that we place out in the field costs us at least US\$3000. Our program provides sustained benefits to the community and to the volunteer, as volunteers use the skills they have developed during their year with Youth Star to obtain ongoing employment and to help establish a 'volunteerism culture' in Cambodia.



Village Children Cooling Off

If you would like to donate to Youth Star there are two main ways to do so: you can donate through this [Globalgiving website](#), or you can follow the [instructions](#) on our new website (another development in 2015!) to make a direct donation. And please tell your friends and colleagues about our work.

Please let me know if you would like any more information about Youth Star's work and thank you again for your support. From all of us at Youth Star, we wish you a happy, healthy and harmonious 2016.