

# Youth Star News

January 2017



## In this issue:

\* International Volunteers Day 2016

\* SWIM Partnership

\* Management Field Visit: Kampong Thom

\* School Enrolment Campaigns 2016

\* Program Team Update and Annual Plan Residency

\* Ms. Kao Sokunpharady Recognition

## International Volunteers Day 2016

Youth Star are proud to have been greatly involved in the organization of, and participation in, Phnom Penh's International Volunteer Day (IVD) and the 6<sup>th</sup> National Forum on Volunteerism. The events took place across Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> of December at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia. Proceedings focused on local theme, 'Volunteer for a Sustainable Cambodia', and celebrated the vital contributions of volunteerism efforts for sustainable development in Cambodia.

As a member of VolCam, (Cambodian Volunteering Network), Youth Star's communications team became instrumental in the organization committee. Primarily their role focused on communications requirements (press releases, condensed agendas, translation of materials etc.) and the insurance of a key event role for Youth Star's staff, volunteers and club members.

Perhaps the greatest testament to Youth Star's tireless youth and community work was the sight of our talented Preah Damrei Youth Club Dancers performing the opening ceremony blessing dance. The confidence and talent on show was amazing in the face of the one thousand on looking ministry, NGO, and volunteerism representatives.

The event also saw Youth Star Program Director Mr. Luy Tech Chheng provided the sole representative of Cambodian volunteerism organizations in the opening panel discussion on 'the role of volunteerism in realizing the SDGs in Cambodia'

Saturday saw the turn of Volunteer Ms. Leoum Mary to take the stage. In highlighting the crucial and innovative Youth Star work, Ms. Mary told her incredible story of change (as is featured in the annual report 2016). Volunteerism is a crucial means of attaining a sustainable Cambodia, and Youth Star is honored to form part of the incredible community delivering positive change.



Youth Star Family, IVD 2016

## School Enrolment Campaigns

October witnessed the hard work of our Volunteers as they carried out School Enrolment Campaigns in their respective communities. With the beginning of a new school year in November it is crucial that no child is left behind.

The process began with the community mapping process in September. Through this, volunteers identified the most vulnerable children unenrolled in school. Utilizing their respective Youth Clubs, enrolment campaigns were then organized to raise awareness in the community about the importance of school education. Club members, parents, teachers and commune figures were all encouraged to join in with peaceful walks and discussions. In total 20 campaigns were undertaken across 3 districts, with the results to be outlined in the upcoming Annual Report 2016.

The seeds sewn in these campaigns provide a growing appreciation of educational importance to the futures of both children and their communities.



Enrolment Campaign in Msar Krong commune, Stoung district, Kompong Thom

## SWIM Partnership

Safety When It Matters (SWIM Cambodia) has been building partnerships in Cambodia since 2014. Focusing on water safety training and delivery, they have built a core network with the iCAN British International School in Phnom Penh and Youth Star's Volunteer Program. Youth Star Program Director Mr. Luy Tech Chheng, and Program Officer Mr. Thang Makara attended and participated in SWIMs Water Safety Education sessions. Conducted on 28th November, the course delivered CPR skills and crucial water safety knowledge to children in Takeo and Chamang Teak villages in Prey Veng province. Youth Star coordinated the communities, with volunteers Mr. Leang

Hor and Mr. Sinym, involved. With these two communities surrounded by and dependent upon water this training is crucial to stopping the wholly preventable deaths witnessed in the communities. 150 participants (130 children) were involved in the session.

Plans are in motion for SWIM trainers to train a new cohort of Youth Star volunteers for 3 days, 20th- 22nd February 2017. These volunteers will go on to deliver water safety education to complement their education development work in the two provinces of Prey Veng and Krachie.



*Water Safety Training*

## **Management Field Visit: Kampong Thom**

In December, the Youth Star Management team travelled to Kampong Thom to undertake a volunteer field visit. This team consisted of Mr. Luy Tech Chheng, Mrs. Sor Sothearom, and Ms. Heng Yen. The purpose of the visit was to understand local conditions, strengthen community relationships and support volunteers.

Volunteers were found to have successfully settled in to their placement communities. Having undergone 4 months in the field, volunteers are beginning to implement their own creative community development initiatives. One such example is the growing of crops in Prasat Balang District. The volunteer responsible, Ms. Pen Sreyrov, uses the activity to enhance vocational skills and generate Youth Club funding through the sale of produce. In line with considering the positives, the Youth Star team also identified ways to tackle the shortcomings; the vegetable garden is lacking sufficient record keeping. Working together, the Youth Star team and Ms. Sreyrov worked together to outline a system of record keeping for the produce and the finance it generates.

The field visit also provided identification of program shortcomings. Youth Star's innovative program demands a lot from our excellent Volunteers and this can occasionally lead to misunderstood objectives. Most common was an over-involvement of Volunteers in leading development activities. Whilst commendable, this diverges from the core aim of facilitation. The importance of facilitating and training Youth Club members resides in the desire for sustainable development where the community will eventually run the Youth Club for themselves. Moving into 2017, Youth Star will outline strategic plans to address identified shortcomings.

## **Program Team Update and Annual Plan Retreat**

In November Youth Star said goodbye to Program Officer Mr. Nin Kosalramet as he undertakes the amazing opportunity of sustainable agriculture program in Hawaii, USA. Stepping in to the role is Mr. Thang Makara. As a former Youth Star Volunteer from the first generation, Makara brings crucial insight, determination and drive to the program team.

In December, the Youth Star Team travelled to Picnic Resort for the Annual Plan meeting. A fantastic 2-day residential provided an excellent opportunity to align priorities for 2017 and provide a staff bonding opportunity. Moving into 2017 Youth Star are poised and ready to enhance volunteering activities, relationships and development.

## **Ms. Kao Sokunpharady Recognition**

In excellent news, Program Officer Ms. Kao Sokunpharady has been chosen to represent Cambodian Youth at the Economic and Social Council 2017 Youth Forum. Selected after a rigorous process, Ms. Sokunpharady will travel to New York for the event running 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> January.

## **Support Us**

### **Donating to Youth Star Cambodia**

**Partner with Youth Star in bringing transformation to the lives of our volunteers and the communities where they work.**

### **Sponsor a Volunteer**

Sponsorship provides greatly required funding in an underserved field. Beyond the ability to engage with and develop a volunteer, your contribution directly benefits the lives of hundreds of children with precious little else. At costs of (US)\$3,500 per volunteer per annum, Youth Star provides necessary training, supervision and support, in addition to recruitment and placement. Whilst costs can be calculated, the potential is immeasurable.



**Please contact us to arrange for your contribution:**

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