

# Youth Star News

October 2015



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## Story of Change – by Veasna Sophea



Veasna Sophea with her students

Veasna Sophea was born in Prey Veng Province. She pursued her bachelor's degree in English literature at Beltei University and graduated in late 2013. Sophea started working as a Youth Star volunteer based in Kampong Thnal Village, Lvea District, Preah Sdach Commune, Prey Veng Province in early 2014. What she remembers most about her one year of service was

the establishment of a commune library and youth club. Due to the fact that

Sophea was an active volunteer, her experience and background have helped her obtain her dream job.

Every weekday, Sophea taught 40 'at risk' children who were struggling to keep up with their schoolwork and therefore at risk of dropping out of school. She also undertook additional educational activities, including providing extra classes to 25 local youth club members, some English language tuition, operating a local library two times per week and taught basic bodily hygiene practices to local children.

Sophea gained strong support from village leaders, which was demonstrated through obtaining donations of furniture to assist her teaching activities and funds from the local community for the erection of a village flagpole. She also arranged for the village chief to open the local kindergarten.

In order to facilitate and run the diverse range of educational and other activities Sophea was also required to develop considerable organizational and planning skills, which will be of great use to her in her future career.

Through the forming of a local youth club, the local youth are developing a more defined role and range of activities in the community, which was welcomed by her local partner and

other community members. During her service, Sophea was invited to participate in Global Saemaul Leadership Forum 2014 in South Korea to share to volunteer experience.

Having struggled and built up her experience through volunteer work with Youth Star Cambodia, Sophea is now working in her dream job. She is employed as a district supply chain coordinator at IDE Cambodia, which is an international non-profit organization.

## Cohort 21 Placed in the Field



Closing ceremony for cohort 21

Upon completing Pre-Departure Training (PDT), our new volunteers, group 21, are now placed in target communities in Kampong Thom and Prey Veng Provinces.

The 15 volunteers are now on the journey of their one year service in the community. We are pleased to have our partners Aide et Action and SIPAR working with us in the two provinces. For the 12 volunteers placed in Kampong Thom, they are working with Aide et Action to advance a comprehensive, inclusive Cambodian education system. In addition, SIPAR is working closely with our volunteers in Prey Veng and Kratie on the promotion of reading.

The recruitment of cohort 21 took us almost three months. We faced the challenges of encouraging new graduates to apply for the program and then selecting the right candidates. In the end our work very successful, aided by a small increase in the monthly stipend and new recruitment methods. Fifteen volunteers have now been trained and placed in the field, which was one of our biggest cohorts ever recruited.



Our volunteers discuss strategies during their placement day in Kampong Thom Province

(CwD), indigenous, female, poor, remote, and over-age students. The expected outcomes include:

1. Youth Star volunteers and local young people are affective agents of change, contributing to gains in functional literacy in rural communities.
2. Out of school children in project target areas are able and encouraged to complete primary education cycle.
3. Education leaders / providers are better equipped to improve education efficiency.
4. The Education environment is improved through advocacy and research.

### Youth Star Receives GPP Certificate

We are delighted to once again be certified with the Cambodian Governance and Professional Practice certificate (NGO GPP). This is the second time Youth Star has received this certificate, which is in place until August 2018.

GPP Certified NGOs provide a role model of good governance, accountability, transparency and professional practices in compliance with GPP Standards and the Voluntary Certification System..



### Volunteering Caravan 2015



Youth Star volunteer grow trees in a primary school campus

Youth Star volunteers based in Prey Veng participated in the *Volunteerism Caravan 2015* on 18 September. Youth Star is one among 12 organizing committees of the event, which is held in

the department of education of Prey Veng. The

Volunteerism Caravan was first launched in June 2014 to travel to different provinces in the country to promote volunteerism, recognize contributions of volunteers outside the capital city and to engage them in discussions about the current status of volunteerism in Cambodia and their contribution to Cambodia's development. The volunteerism session always has a focus on a project that volunteers are working on in the province, e.g. last year it was on an activity to promote environmental awareness in young people, focusing on how littering and waste disposal affects the community. This year's topic was how volunteerism contributes Sustainable Development Goals. Our volunteers actively participated in the discussion and shared their experience of voluntary service. As a part of the program, they also planted trees in the primary school's campus. Their participation always reminds us that service is a powerful way to unite individuals and strengthen communities.

### New Partnership with Aide et Action

Youth Star Cambodia and Aide et Action are now working together in Kampong Thom Province. The two-year partnership (2015-2016) aims at contributing to a comprehensive, inclusive Cambodian education system that caters for every child, including children with a disability

## Support Us

### Donating to Youth Star Cambodia

Youth Star Cambodia's aim is to empower Cambodian youth as volunteers to improve the quality of life in vulnerable communities through education and civic participation. Your donation can help us achieve our mission, helping establish children's and youth clubs and supporting education programs run by Youth Star volunteers. It costs only \$3000 to place a graduate volunteer in a rural community for one year. Every little bit helps!

You can make donations directly to Youth Star by following the instructions at <http://youthstarcambodia.org/donate/>, or you can donate through:



Thank you!