

## The Little Dewed Frog

By Miss CHAP Phanideth (Volunteer of Cohort 32)

After graduating from high school, I pursued Bachelor Degree of Art in English at an institute in my hometown, Kampot. Dating back to my past, I was so quiet and shy that I didn't dare to talk to anyone. A slow life as university student for 4 years quickly left me until now with two statements from everyone around me: *"You will never achieve anything with your little skinny body and quietness!"* and *"You can never be a teacher while you yourself barely talk!"* Nonetheless, only a few people knew that I was already a teacher during that time. These words made me think and respond in my mind that *"It is just a matter of time until I let you all see such a great work achieved by this little skinny girl!"*



One day, I found an opportunity to be a Youth Star's volunteer, and I decided to apply for it. Then, I started off my mission in Kampi community, Kratie province in July 2020. Speaking of my feeling when I first arrived in this community, I genuinely found it a little difficult to communicate with the people here. As a result, I had no choice but to lock myself in my room, watching the moon through the window every night, and telling myself that *"keep it up, you've already made a decision to come here, so you must overcome these obstacles!"*

Living in the community from one day to another, I noticed some gradual change in myself—I talked more; I became more confident to share my thoughts and ideas, chitchat, and create a lively friendly atmosphere with everyone in the community as though I were a frog in dry season getting dewed, unlike before, acting like a trunk in front of people.

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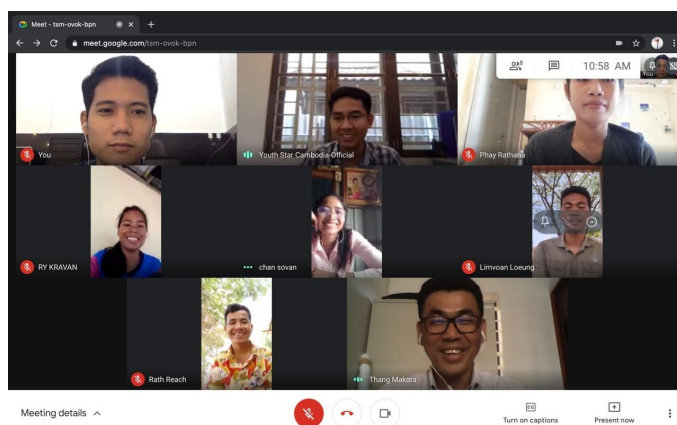
Not to mention, I even began to realize the surroundings of the world out there.

Thank you, Youth Star, for transforming and developing my soft skills through an abundance of voluntary and community work, and I fully comprehend that in order to do voluntary work and contribute to this country, it doesn't matter whether or not we are wealthy. Life lesson in the name of youth volunteer that I acquire during this mission is already a priceless gift for me. I am truly proud of myself as a Cambodian youth for contributing what I have and what I can do to this community as well as fulfilling my obligation with pleasure to participate in the development of Cambodia.

## Meeting with Volunteer Candidates

On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Youth Star Cambodia conducted a virtual meeting with our volunteer candidates on the preparation for Pre-Departure Training (PDT) before their voluntary service gets started in the communities. In the meeting, the candidates shared with us the updates on their current situation under the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we became more understanding and intimate to one another throughout the whole talk.

Moreover, in order to keep our candidates informed about our program and their volunteering journey, we provided them with a session on preparation for PDT so that they would be able to identify any possible upcoming challenges and opportunities for them to learn and enhance their skills and knowledge through their voluntary service in the community.

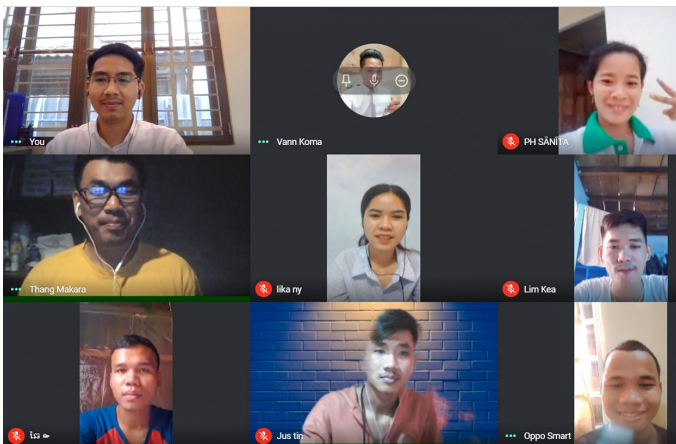


Group photo with our volunteer candidates

## Virtual Youth Star Program Orientation

With the purpose of introducing Youth Star Cambodia to a wider group of people, especially Cambodian youth from different walks of life, on 9 April 2021, Youth Star Cambodia conducted a virtual Youth Star program orientation with participation of 14 Cambodian undergraduates and graduates from various academic backgrounds, who are currently pursuing their degree in Phnom Penh and in provinces.

In the session, the participants were given a presentation on Youth Star’s program and had dialogues with our current Youth Star volunteers **Ms. Ry Lika** and **Mr. Vann Koma** from cohort 31 and 33 respectfully, who were our honored guest speakers for the session to share their work, experiences, skills, and love they obtain from their voluntary service in the communities in Prey Veng province.



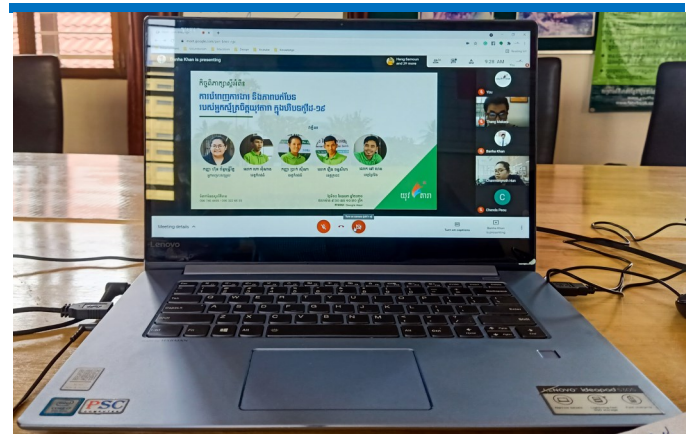
Group photo after the session

During the Question & Answer session, our speakers responded to a number of questions raised by the participants mostly about challenges, motivation, and inspiration behind their voluntary service. Not to mention, **Mr. Vann Koma** shared his view with the participants that *“We all possess different abilities and skills, but for those who are unsure of how and where to use them, I think engaging themselves in voluntary service to our community is one of the ways.”*

### Virtual Experience Sharing on “Youth Star Volunteer’s service and flexibility under the Covid 19 pandemic”

During the pandemic, every part of the world has been getting harder for people to handle their normal tasks for the maximum productivity, thus putting people into a more challenging work environment. Like those from the rest of the world, Youth Star’s volunteers now have been working so hard to go through this challenge, using their unique way of flexibilities and motivation to volunteer their service for the community in the area of education for the children and still potentially manage to maximize their output.

Bringing to the table with our volunteers’ ways of taking their own accountability for the growth in children in this hard time is worth sharing with the public, especially those working in the same area.



Therefore, on 10 May 2021, Youth Star Cambodia successfully conducted a virtual panel discussion with the topic *“Youth Star Volunteers’ Service and Flexibility under the COVID-19 Pandemic”* with participation of 50 Cambodian youths from various backgrounds and 4 honored guest speakers: **Ms. Prak Sina**; **Mr. Nao Heng**; **Mr. Hor Enang**; and **Mr. Voerung Chanseyha** who are our current volunteers in their service to different communities in Kampong Thom, Kratie, and Prey Veng provinces.

In the discussion, our speakers mentioned that a lot of learning and participatory activities have got delayed, canceled or at most achieved with less desirable result due to a number of challenges and limitations, including smaller participation of children, everyone’s fear of the virus, online channel with poor connection, etc.

Nevertheless, our volunteers do not stop there and even come up with different flexible ways to reach out children. They mentioned that one of the ways to ensure the learning for children never stops is through our commitment to keeping moving forward by taking the 3 do’s and the 3 don’ts into serious account, then undertaking mobile library and tutoring classes for smaller groups of students at different times when time allows.

## SUPPORT US

Donate to Youth Star Cambodia  
Partner with Youth Star to bring transformation to the lives of our volunteers and the communities where they serve.

### Sponsor a Volunteer

Your sponsorship will provide a greatly needed funding for an underserved community. Beyond the ability to engage with and support a volunteer, your contribution directly benefits the lives of hundreds of children. At a cost of US\$3,500 per volunteer per annum, Youth Star provides living allowance, necessary training, supervision and support, in addition to recruitment and placement. Whilst costs can be calculated, the potential is immeasurable.

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