



HELP + CAMBODIA

2020 Annual Report- What a Year It's Been!

The new Help Cambodia committee started the year 2020 full of enthusiasm and ideas for projects and fundraising events.

We began by finalising the details of our new University Scholarship Fund and approving applications from 8 students. We also began reviewing the Student Sponsorship Handbook in earnest - a project that had been in the pipeline for sometime but not finalised.

And then...the world as we knew it changed! COVID 19 hit and there was uncertainty and confusion around the world.

After receiving reports from the DCC School manager about the dire situation local families were facing in the Steung Mean Chey area it was decided that funds for food parcels would need to be sent over urgently as many families were facing starvation due to job losses caused by border closures and lockdown procedures with little or no government assistance being forthcoming. Food parcels were distributed to grateful families in April and August to help see them through the COVID crisis.



Thankfully throughout this year of chaos and uncertainty our sponsor numbers have remained steady at around 78 so a huge THANK YOU to those generous sponsors who continued to provide this support.

Help Cambodia also received a number of very generous donations after we provided an email update on the situation in Cambodia to sponsors and supporters. We are very grateful to those who showed us their generosity in this way.

In an effort to keep our supporters well informed we increased our social media footprint with more regular posts being put up on Facebook and Instagram. We are very grateful to the people who kindly manage these two social media platforms for us.

DCC staff worked hard throughout the extended lockdown periods to provide lessons for students to undertake from home. Schools were closed and reopened a number of times by the government which created a lot of difficulties for students and interrupted their learning. School staff were very mindful of following COVID guidelines when school finally reopened.



As if the situation in Cambodia wasn't already bad enough our friends from the Battambang Ophthalmic Centre faced severe flooding throughout the city caused by heavy rain and the opening of floodgates to a dam. However funding from Wollundry Rotary for a piece of vital equipment for this centre came through at about this time which helped raise the spirits of the centre's staff a little whilst dealing with the daunting flood clean-up process.



The DCC school building also sustained significant damage to one of its classrooms due to torrential rain however repairs were able to be made with Help Cambodia funds.



It was with mixed feelings that we farewelled a valued DCC staff member, Thayheng Nhem, who resigned in September to take up an opportunity to continue his studies in Paris. We were pleased to see the DCC staff were able to acknowledge Thayheng's contributions by holding a small farewell dinner for him. Whilst his efficient administration skills will be greatly missed we are very excited for him to be undertaking such a momentous step in his career aspirations.



Zoom meetings enabled our dedicated committee to continue functioning through the lockdown period and a few other achievements were made.

We approved a small increase to the DCC staff wages as this had not been addressed for some years.

We established a welfare fund to cater for the health and welfare needs of the DCC community.

We formulated plans for a gift fund for DCC students which we aim to implement next year.

We had new gift cards printed which we plan to sell at future events. A big thank you to Active Print Signarama for the excellent job done on these.

It was clear quite early on that international travel was not likely to be possible so unfortunately our planning for the annual trip to Cambodia had to be abandoned for this year.

After arrangements for a couple of planned fundraising events had to be cancelled due to ongoing Covid restrictions we managed to hold a Melbourne Cup Lunch fundraiser by enlisting the assistance of some keen friends of Help Cambodia. These loyal supporters hosted small in-home COVID compliant events in lieu of our annual larger gathering. As our only fundraiser for the year this helped us to raise a significant amount of much needed funds. We sincerely thank those dozen or so hosts who willingly gave of their time and energy by opening their home or workplace for the benefit of our cause.



Our valued sponsors, supporters and Wollundry Rotary rose to the challenges faced this year and continued to show their generosity and commitment towards our less fortunate Cambodian friends in one of the toughest years in recent times - for this the Help Cambodia committee extends our sincerest thanks.

