



HELP + CAMBODIA

2024 Annual Report

HELP Cambodia has had a very successful year with a number of notable achievements.

The trip to Cambodia last November was an amazing experience for all who went. Some of the committee visited a couple of other NGOs in the Steung Mean Chey area to learn a little about how other organisations operate and support families in the DCC school vicinity. Some of the Rotarian trip participants were able to secure donations from various Rotary Clubs prior to our visit. These funds allowed us to present the students with new backpacks, school uniforms and stationary supplies for the 2024 school year. All the students were very excited and grateful to receive these gifts. In addition to visiting DCC school and meeting the students there we also visited a rural village where Bophal's in-laws live and spent the day there being hosted and entertained by some of DCC's senior students along with Bophal and his family. In Siem Reap we assisted Heartprint, a partner organisation, by providing them with clothing donations and 2nd hand laptops as well as spending two days conducting a careers expo with the Heartprint students. Interacting with them in this way was certainly a lot of fun and gave them some insight into the types of occupations they may choose to pursue if they work hard through their school years. A vital message to impart. Our tour group also undertook a Days for Girls kit distribution and delivered the associated education for this program to students from Poring Junior High School. This activity was very well received by students and staff of the school. We also visited a rural area where an elderly care program is underway with a proposal to build a communal facility for the elderly of the area. We all agreed this is a very worthwhile project. Apart from these rewarding volunteering opportunities our tour group took in some of the many amazing tourist highlights Cambodia has to offer.

2024 kicked off with an opportunity in January to speak at the Walwa-Jingellic Lions Club at their Australia Day breakfast. President Cheryl and Treasurer Ken attended this event. Our message was well received and resulted in a generous donation being made to our cause as well as making some extra income from a Cambodian artefacts stall which we ran in conjunction with the Australia Day celebrations. These funds were put towards buying some iPads for DCC school to assist younger students with learning English. We have also researched a number of online teaching resources which will now assist DCC teachers in providing fun interactive lessons in English. The remainder of the funds needed for the iPads was generously provided by Wollundry Rotary, a long time supporter of our cause. Wollundry Rotary also provided sponsorship for 2 DCC students, a contribution which is greatly appreciated. Inner Wheel (a Rotary affiliated women's service organisation) also continues to sponsor and communicate with a DCC student. We are ever grateful for the ongoing support from our Rotary friends.

DCC benefited again in the technology area with 15 new computers generously provided by our corporate sponsor Tony Tsiolis from Astrontech, a small Sydney based IT company. Tony's company also continues to sponsor 20 of our students which is a huge boost to our sponsored student numbers.

In January Bophal provided us with some impressive data around outcomes achieved by DCC and HELP Cambodia in relation to the university scholarships we provide to worthy students. Of the 8 students who so far have passed through DCC and university 6 that we know of have achieved employment in their chosen field. Their listed occupations are: working in accounts at a hotel, two working in customer service for Credit Bureau Cambodia, a computer technician at a computer store, a web designer & digital marketer for Phnom Penh Autonomous Port Authority, and a mail translator with Cambodian Children's Fund (another charity working in Phnom Penh). 2 of the graduates were not able to be contacted. These are outcomes that we are very proud of as all these students come from families where low paid, menial labour jobs were the only options for their parents

and without the educational support from DCC and HELP Cambodia, university would not be possible let alone securing well paid employment.

This year we had 6 DCC graduates undertaking university studies and being supported by HELP Cambodia's university scholarship fund. One of these students gained good employment and is now supporting herself at university and is no longer requiring our scholarship support.

We expect that there will be 5 students commencing university in the coming year. 4 of whom have applied for university scholarship support. The fifth student expects to gain a government scholarship and won't require HELP Cambodia's assistance which we believe is also a great outcome.

In April HELP Cambodia was the beneficiary of the Wagga Wagga Country Club's Golden Hole Competition. This raised around \$2600 for our organisation which is a wonderful outcome for us. We really appreciated this support offered by the golf club and its members.

In late April we became aware that Cambodia was experiencing an unusual heat wave. Temperatures recorded were the highest in 170 years. At one stage it was so extreme that the government closed schools for a week. Having personally experienced how oppressive the heat is in the country in a normal season our committee decided to provide A/C and insulation to the office for our school manager as working in an unlined corrugated iron room through the heat of the day would be virtually unbearable.

DCC currently supports 104 students, 79 of whom are sponsored by our generous HELP Cambodia sponsors. More support is needed to cover the shortfall so we are always looking for new sponsors to take up a \$40 per month contribution.

Many of the HELP Cambodia sponsors have elected to be "active communicators" with their sponsored students and thus undertake regular email communication through a monitored email address. Students are assisted with this communication where necessary by a mail translator employed by DCC. Whilst this communication is a choice made by the sponsors, the students who communicate with their sponsor in this way certainly benefit greatly from it as their written English skills improve with regular practice.

Public speaking is a focus for English classes at DCC and students continue to gain confidence and skills in speaking English through opportunities to practise in this area. This is particularly evident when our team visits DCC school. Our trip participants are always amazed at the students' abilities when they participate in a welcome performance for our visiting group.

In closing I would like to thank the committee for their tireless efforts and our valued sponsors and supporters whose contributions together enable Bophal and his staff of DCC to continue educating students and assisting them to achieve a better, brighter future.

