



April 2023

Hello Growing Cambodia Supporters

10 Year Anniversary in Cambodia

In December 13 supporters took off from Melbourne Airport on an eight-day trip to Siem Reap to be part of the 10-year celebrations of Growing Cambodia. They were joined by 7 other supporters who made their separate ways from various places including Queensland and Singapore. At a dinner organised by the local managers for all the teachers and university students the supporters relaxed and enjoyed meeting our wonderful local team face to face. Each teacher and university student were formally acknowledged by a member of the travelling group. Certificates of Appreciation and gifts for 10 Years of Service were presented to Sopheak Phay, Vatvey Ouch, Sovann Kay and Ms Ratha Som for their incredible contributions over the journey.



During the trip the group visited the 4 villages and schools supported by Growing Cambodia. There they were taken on a tour of each village before playing games with the students, helping in the classrooms, and organising art classes.



There was also plenty of time for shopping for local products and seeing the sights – including watching the sunrise at Angkor Watt (Tick on Bucket List) and a trip to Battambang for a ride on a train! We also visited a local partner – Eco Soap – who supply soap to our students and schools. Eco Soap now employs 40 local women on a full-time basis – it was amazing to see this enterprise in operation that has also changed the lives of many women.

Local restaurants were visited with the highlight being dinner at The Haven where locals are trained for the hospitality industry – the food and service was incredible – well done to The Haven as well for changing people's lives for the better.



A final thank-you to Sopheak and Vatvey for organising and looking after us so well and to all the supporters who travelled to Cambodia. Eight days passed so quickly. However new lifelong friendships were formed, and our first-time visitors now have a better understanding of what Growing Cambodia does and how it operates.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Donations to Growing Cambodia

All donations to Growing Cambodia are tax deductible. We ask that you consider either making a one-off donation, a donation for a specific cause and/or a regular monthly donation.

Our bank details are:
Growing Cambodia Inc
BSB: 633000
Account: 150148583

Please then email us at enquiry@growingcambodia.org.au and we will send you a receipt.

Please see other ways to help on the last page of the newsletter.

Annual Fundraising Night – Lock it in!

This year's Fundraising Night promises to be the biggest and best yet! Block out Saturday 9 September 2023 in your calendar. After such a great time last year we are returning to the Phillip Island Adventure Resort. Start recruiting for your tables now!



Support from New York

We were thrilled to recently receive a donation of US \$2000 from our friends in New York.

Peggy and her friends got together before Christmas for a wreath making event and because of all their hard work a donation was then made to Growing Cambodia.

Peggy had organised this very successful event once before but then Covid came along. A very big **THANK YOU** to Peggy and all her friends for getting together again and making this wonderful donation.



**Thank
you!**

High Tea

A hugely successful High Tea was enjoyed by 58 ladies and supported financially by others in February. The event was organised by Nola Brooks and Vicki Wilkinson (with help from friends) and held at Nola's home.

The volume of fun, love and laughter was enormous, as everyone enjoyed a delicious 3-tiered menu with sweet and savory treats, served on 'yesterdays' China teacups and platters and topped off with champagne, coffee, and a choice of teas. All food and drinks were donated.

Guests could also walk through the Pop-Up Shop and purchase:

- Eco Soap packages (bought back from Cambodia) - supporting a local factory employing 40 Cambodian women.
- Beautiful crochet soft toys - donated and made with love.
- A variety of candles - donated and made with love.
- A book and puzzle exchange for a gold coin.
- A rack of clothing to browse through.

There was a Lucky door prize just for supporting the High Tea as well as 2 raffle prizes. Guests also enjoyed a 6-minute video on a snapshot of "Who We Are" – 10 years strong!

A total of \$4725.80 was raised for Growing Cambodia on the day – thank you Nola, Vicki and all the ladies that either attended and/or contributed to such a wonderful day.



Operational Update

New Classes and Classrooms

The start of 2023 has seen 2 new classes commence at Kok Beng with 3 new classes being added at Beng. The classes at Beng are being taught in a new classroom which was opened on 12 December – 10 years to the day after the first building at Oroluos opened for classes.

The classroom was built in memory of Pat Giles, Growing Cambodia's oldest volunteer, with the funds being donated by her son Stephen. Thank you, Steve, for such a wonderful gesture for both your mother and the children in the Beng community – we are sure your Mum would have been honored and proud of your generosity.

More exciting news occurred at Koy Meng where free English classes are being offered to secondary school students for the first time. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 can now learn English with the expansion of our program in this community.

Growing Cambodia is now offering free English lessons to over 1000 children in the four rural Cambodian communities we currently support.



Operational Update (cont)

New Teachers

With additional classes at the schools, we have been very fortunate to welcome 3 more wonderful teachers to our Team:

1. Ms Hong Chantry comes to us with an excellent background having studied at USEA in Siem Reap and then the Battambang Teacher Education College and CUS BMC as a trainee teacher. Ms Chantry has been teaching English since 2019 at Sras Reang Secondary School. Ms Chantry will be teaching the Years 7,8 and 9 students at Koy Meng.
2. Mr. Uonn Orn joins us at Beng. Mr Orn is a former student of Oroluos and has just obtained a Bachelor degree from the University of Battambang. Welcome back!
3. Mr. Samnang has started at Kok Beng where he is teaching 2 classes between 5.30pm and 7.30pm each evening. Mr Samnang also teaches at Stepping Stones, just down the road, during the day.

Thank you to our three new teachers and we wish you all the best.

There are now 13 local teachers conducting our classes and working with our managers Sopheak Phay and Vattey Ouch to deliver daily lessons to the students.

Kok Beng School

Although we were ultimately unsuccessful in returning to the temple site, the great news is that the Kok Beng Primary School has allowed us to hold more classes in the evening.



Mr Orn with Ms Ratha

Beng

In addition to the new classroom being completed at Beng, renovations have been completed on a new washing area installed for the students. Funds for these very welcomed improvements were also donated by Stephen Giles.

It is hoped these classrooms will no longer flood in the wet season and the students will no longer get wet feet while sitting in class! **THANK YOU** again Steve!



Committee for 2022/2023

Our Committee for the coming year is:

Nola Brooks	Vicki Williamson
Nyree Davis	Jen Carroll
Sigrid Tucker	Ash Reed
Warren Davie	Fiona Francis
Jeff Floyd	Pam McAlister (Secretary)
Owen Bentley (Treasurer)	Steve Davie (Chair)

Please contact any of our committee members if you would like to become involved!

We would also like to acknowledge and thank past committee members **Deb Kerry, Melanie Evans, Greg Thompson, Glenda Salter** and **Sharon Elliot** for all of their time and efforts in helping Growing Cambodia.

Ways you can help

University Sponsorships

We currently have eleven students attending University. The percentage of secondary students going on to obtain University degrees is extremely low in Cambodia mainly due to affordability. You can help a student attend a University in Siem Reap and give them an opportunity to obtain qualifications that will help them earn a higher income. The cost to support a student at university is between \$700-\$1,000 per annum.

“Fill the Bag” Scholarships

You might also like to contribute to a scholarship that allows disadvantaged students to attend a government school. Without this support, these children would not receive any education whatsoever!

The cost to “Fill the Bag” of a student and send them off to school for one year is \$70.00 – this includes the cost of a uniform, a school bag, an exercise book and other stationery.

Sponsor a School

If you would like to assist on a larger scale you may consider sponsoring one of our four schools. Please contact us for further details.

All donations to Growing Cambodia Inc. are tax deductible.

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BSB: 633000

Account 150148583

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"Encouraging a better more sustainable quality of life"

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