



THE SAVONG FOUNDATION CAMBODIA ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Phil Caldwell CEO
Jenny Lau Treasurer
Eddie Lamborn Scholarship Manager
Sean Heim Music Project Manager
Brandi Jackson Secretary

www.savongfoundation.org

501(c)(3) non profit for
Cambodia

LETTER FROM THE CEO



We strive to find financially underprivileged students with big dreams who are motivated to pursue professional careers.

Phil Caldwell CEO

"Starting a nonprofit in Cambodia would be easy," they said ...

Actually, no one ever said that. In fact, many pondered how I initially intended to raise money, how I planned to sustain operations and then there was the obvious question, "Why Cambodia?"

These were all valid points when the Savong Foundation became a 501c3 nonprofit in May of 2011 but almost thirteen years later, we are still going strong and in a lot of ways, we are better than ever.

We have a very special place in our hearts for those donors who have been with us from the beginning--we never would have come this far without their support--but if you are new to our nonprofit or thinking about coming on board as student benefactor, here are some pieces of information that you might find interesting or helpful.

THE SAVONG FOUNDATION CAMBODIA IS NAMED AFTER A MAN

My first trip to Cambodia was waaay back in 2008 when I took a sabbatical from my job and travelled to South East Asia. I didn't want to limit myself to the standard "TripAdvisor list of things to do" so I decided to contact a Cambodia man named Savong who had built a free English language school in the countryside.

I still remember meeting him and our half-hour journey as he took me to his school, feeling very nervous that I was alone with a stranger going to a place I knew nothing about. Eventually we arrived at a small school as the sun was setting on the humid jungle. After spending about an hour there, I was inspired by the enthusiasm of the students as well as what was accomplished with relatively little money and a big desire to help. At that point, the seed was planted for me to come back and help in my own way.

Sadly, Savong has since moved on to other ventures but his passion for helping Cambodian youth was the main reason I decided to make my second trip to Cambodia which ultimately led to the formation of the Savong Foundation Cambodia.



THE SYMBOLISM OF THE LOTUS

After I decided to form the nonprofit and had the name in place, the next step was to create a logo. If you've ever been to South East Asia, then you know that lotuses are everywhere. An incredibly beautiful flower, it has associated symbolism depending on the color.

A red lotus is all about compassion, selfless love and other qualities of the heart. This seemed perfect for a nonprofit which was going to be founded on generosity with the goal of helping others. Thanks to a friend of mine, a logo was designed that incorporated a modern red lotus. At the time, we were simply named The Savong Foundation but was later changed to the Savong Foundation Cambodia to better communicate which country we support.



WE SUPPORT ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF STUDENTS

We began by supporting only six students and now we fluctuate between 20 and 25. We will never be a foundation that supports hundreds of students and we're perfectly fine with that. For starters, a small number of students keeps the work manageable and it can fit into a part-time schedule.



More importantly, our scale permits us to know all our students individually and we can treat them like family. We follow their journeys closely as they pass through their high school and university years.

We select our students based on three criteria:

- **The best students based on academic performance**
- **Most in need of financial help**
- **Those who want to pursue a professional career**



For the past couple of years, I interview about 10 students, then narrow it down to about 5. Then I meet with the families and see their homes. Then roughly 2 to 3 scholarships are awarded each year.

It's a tough process (for both me and the students) but this process has given us the best students we have ever had.

EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA IS SURPRISINGLY EXPENSIVE

Since we are supporting the best students, we want to find the best education for them. Despite the fact that the education in government schools has improved, we still send our high school students to private school and this obviously comes with a higher price tag.

In the higher grades, then can be well over \$1000/year. Extra classes and school supplies can push this closer to \$2000/year. When many families in Cambodia still make \$200 to \$400/month, there isn't a lot left over for education, especially in families with multiple children.



At the university level, the tuition cost fluctuates depending on whether the student decides to go to a private or government university. For many of our students, we encourage them to study in Phnom Penh where the professional degrees are generally superior but it does add significantly to our costs. Many professional degrees have tuitions in the neighborhood of \$1500/year and we've paid up to \$5000/year for a degree at the American University of Phnom Penh.



OUR OVERHEAD IS VERY LOW

Right from the formation of the foundation, we've been able to keep the overhead very low. We currently have five board members and none of them are paid. We only have one paid staff member, Rathana who manages our students in Cambodia and he is currently paid \$500/month.

We have bookkeeping expenses and wire fees and costs associated with updating the website but we try to keep these as low as possible.



WE RELY ON PUBLIC DONATIONS BUT WE DO HAVE A CORPORATE SPONSOR

When the Foundation was first established, I was worried where any money was going to come from. After we had exhausted friends and family, who else was going to support students in Cambodia? Somewhat surprisingly, enough money kept on coming in each month from people who had either been to Cambodia or heard through word of mouth what we were trying to do.

After we had been established for a couple of years, I had a very fortuitous meeting with a rep from iHerb.com. This is an online company which sells vitamins and supplements and they already had a presence in Cambodia doing nonprofit work. They agreed to a monthly support and they have been an integral part of our success every since.

iHerb®

WE NORMALLY PAIR UP STUDENTS WITH A SPONSOR

Our original working model was to pair a student with a donor. This approach had a couple of benefits; it was easier to budget for each students and it also facilitated communication between donor and student which made it more interesting for everyone involved.



Unfortunately there were a couple of drawbacks; some students had multiple donors which made it somewhat confusing and once a student graduated, we often lost that donor. With the focus on direct student support, we found that it was more difficult to raise money for the nonprogram expenses such as money transfers, salary and miscellaneous expenditures.

Thankfully, we have recently received discretionary donations which allow us to use money where there is the greatest need. This flexibility has made a world of difference when students go from high school to a university program with relatively high tuition expenses such as medical school. However, we still work to align students with donors so if you're interested in becoming a student sponsor, all you have to do is ask.



THERE ARE LESSONS THAT WE HAVE LEARNED

I would be lying if I said that everything has been smooth sailing from the beginning and I could likely write an entire book about the lessons that we've learned. My biggest mistake many years ago was having an unfocused vision and scattering our help across an "ocean of need." When we had some extra money, we started to get involved in different projects.



At one point, we were building water pumps for houses, running a student living/learning center, providing free English classes, toothbrushes, mosquito nets and bicycles. It was too much for a small nonprofit and only served to dilute the impact we should have been having.



After some time, we decided to narrow our focus on providing scholarships for the best and the brightest students. The younger students would live at home and if need be, we would provide living expenses for university students. I believe that this targeted focus has greatly improved our impact; not just for our students but also for their families. It should also be noted that we have a music program which has provided workshops for emerging composers, musicians and singers, mostly notably celebrating Khmer music and culture.

However, this is funded separately but still falls under our more streamlined mission to provide education for talented and ambitious young students.

CAMBODIA IS A RICH AND BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY

I hear a lot of my friends say that they would like to go to Thailand or Vietnam. I remind them that there is an amazing "Kingdom of Wonder" that rests between those two countries that has a rich and varied cultural history dating back more than a thousand years.



The whole reason I went to Cambodia back in 2008 was to photograph the incredible temples of the Angkor Wat complex which I had wanted to do since I was in high school. They exceeded my expectations back then and I never fail to learn something new with each subsequent visit. If you haven't seen them, then please add them to your bucket list.

But Cambodia is more than Angkor Wat despite the fact that it appears prominently on the country's flag. Visitors can enjoy the vibrant and cosmopolitan Phnom Penh, the backpacker delights of Battambang and the expansive beach beauty of Koh Rong. It has enough rustic areas that you can feel as if you're the first tourist exploring an area but if "roughing" it isn't your thing, you can pamper yourself in some of the best modern spas and restaurants to rival anywhere else in the world. But ultimately, it's the people that have kept me coming back all these years; they are appreciative and kind and if you've been to Cambodia you know exactly what I'm talking about.



The Savong Foundation Cambodia is now in its 13th year. Our mission is to provide underprivileged students with academic and music scholarships. We are so thankful for your support.



Akun!

Dr. Phil Caldwell

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide young underprivileged Cambodians with academic and music scholarships.



We believe in giving our students the best quality education that we can find.



We match donors to students and we encourage them to communicate via email letters or videos--although we discourage direct communication.



We are not a "charity"; we provide our students with opportunities but we expect them to work hard for themselves and their families in return.

We have two main areas of support:

OUR PROJECTS

Scholarships Program

We provide tuition at the Future Bright International High School and the IQ International School in Siem Reap and at top universities in Siem Reap as well as Phnom Penh. Depending on the need, we provide school supplies, including laptop computers and transportation which is usually a bicycle. We track student grades and attendance and have a scholarship and student managers in Cambodia to address any issues that arise.

Scholarship sponsorship starts at \$25/month and can go up to \$100/month or more. Any donation amount is of course, deeply appreciated.

Music Program

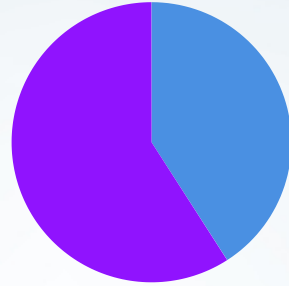
We have partnered with the Nirmita Composers Institute which is dedicated to teaching and nurturing the next generation of Cambodian composers in both the Khmer traditional and Western art music genres. NCI also encourages the cultural exchange among nations in the region and within the global community.



2023: A YEAR IN NUMBERS

22

Scholarships awarded at the start of 2023/24 school year (19 renewed; 3 new)



- Young Men Scholarships (40.91%)
- Young Women Scholarships (59.09%)

9

Students in Grades K to 12



13

Students in University



2023 Graduates from University

3



Total Contributions
\$63,893

from

UNITED KINGDOM



Canada



USA



Australia



We are at a Platinum Level of Transparency on Guidestar so we're committed to financial transparency!

MEET OUR STUDENT: THIDA

INFORMATION ABOUT MY FAMILY



I'm Thida. I'm in grade 11. I really like to study in FBIS because students in here very friendly, like to sharing about study, teachers teaching well. Good education. The standard exam has no duplication or questioning. Now I live with my family. My mother, she is a cleaner. She gets \$230 per month. My father, he is a monk. He can not help us. He has a diabetes when I was 7 years old until now it took for 11 years. My elder sister, she is a student in university. My mom didn't pay her school price. She gets a scholarship from university 100% so no need to pay the money. She can not go to work because this scholarship do not let students go to work. She was born in Siem Reap. My older brother, he is in grade 12. He didn't have a job too. He was born in Siem Reap. We are live in Siem Reap province Kandek commune brasatbakong district. In my house we have 8 people. Grandparents, two cousins, mom, elder sister, elder brother, and me. Only mom goes to work. Her money can't help us. It's not enough. Sometimes we didn't have anything to eat too. But we try our best like go to fishing get some fish to eat. In the future, I want to be a doctor because I really love this job. I pity many people were sick but they didn't have money to take care their self. If this work is successful, I will create a fund for the poor, the orphans who are unable to afford it, and I will create a home for the elderly.

Even though my help is not paid by them, I still enjoy helping. And I want to see all of them smile. Want to develop this country to have a generous heart like me, which has no hatred.

22.01.2024

MEET OUR STUDENT: VATHANA

Part I

My Family

My name is Vuthy Vathana. I am 18 years old and have two younger siblings. My younger sister's name is Somnang Liza. She is 11 years old and studies in grade 6 at Svaythom primary school. My little brother's name is Heng Sokleap. He is 8 years old and also a student at Svaythom primary school. He is in grade 2 this year. We all were born in Battambang province and live together in a small rent room with a single mom in Siem Reap. Her name is Va Somontha. She is 42 years old and was born in Phnom Pen. She moved to Battambang since she was a child and got married there. For now we all live in Siem Reap because of her job.

My mother is a very struggling and the strongest person to me because no matter how hard the situation is, she always tries to support her children and never lets them suffer alone. She is the only person who works and supports the whole family. She works as a Tuk Tuk driver and feeds four people. She can earn money around 250-300\$ each month. It is so little for feeding the whole family.

I used to study at Hun Sen Svaythom high school which known as a public school. The school there was full of kind students and quite good but I still need to change because I got another better opportunity to study at a private school. That school has a higher quality and higher standard than my previous school. I also like my new school because I found out that most people there are nice and the school also has a more comfortable environment for me than my old school. I can say that I am so lucky to be here and to be

My Family

selected as a full scholarship student by The Savong Foundation Cambodia which always helps poor children to find a bright future.

I am currently a grade 12 student who studies at Future Bright international school which known as FBIS. I feel so comfortable with my new school because of the friendly teachers and students here. They all are kind. I also like the study programs at FBIS. Though I need to study a lot of hours a day, I do not feel any stressed. This school programs make me learn more and details than my previous school programs. To be honest, I plan to get grade A this year by trying my own best for the international exams, so I try to study other extra classes for strengthen my knowledge. No matter how bad the result is, I still try more and more unless I will not fail and at least, I did my best. I always take the mistakes as my experiences and learn from them to make sure that I will not repeat the same mistake next time.

In the future, I want to be a doctor because I want to help sick people especially children who need help with their illnesses. I just want to cure their illnesses though they are poor and I cannot earn money from them for sometimes. It is a job that can save people's lives. I also plan to take the exams at the University of Health Sciences and study there in Phnom Pen after I graduate from high school but if I have a chance to study abroad, I would choose to study in Canada because it is a beautiful country and the second largest country in the world. Especially, it is a developed country which has a very high technology of education, and it rarely has conflict with the other countries. This is might just a dream for me but as long as I try my best, I am going to make it become a reality.

My Family

Finally, I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to The Savong Foundation Cambodia for sponsoring me, and I am very thankful for Dr.Phil Caldwell and Board for everything. I am also very thankful for Mr. Rathana and the other sponsors for helping me so far. Without your helps and sponsorings, my life would be suffering a lot these days. I will always be grateful for your support and will never make all of you disappointed in me. Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything that you have done for me.



♥♥ MOM ♥♥

♥♥ MY SISTER AND BROTHER ♥♥

A THANK YOU FROM OUR STUDENTS

Dear : Dr. Phil Caldwell and Board

We were really excited for your return to Cambodia, even though other sponsors didn't come with, but this was our good personal presence and your presence was a great time for us. There are so many things we did together emotionally and happy smiles all the time. What was special on the 16th was really exciting because we missed each other for a long time. Then the 20th was a great opportunity for us to meet again and talk about study and university information and selection for majors to study at the university. This meeting shows the concern for our future. Next, going to the pagoda together on 24th are also a good time for us to be close like a family. After all, having dinner on this 28th was a special day, full of fun and satiety because of the delicious food that accompanies the hustle and bustle.

A THANK YOU FROM OUR STUDENTS

We hope that you and sponsors will continue to support and assist us other children in Cambodia. This is one of the best humanitarian acts that will give us and our country a better future.

Anyway we would like to say Thank you to Phil and all our sponsors for supporting us to study. Thank for giving us a chance to study at the good schools and give us of study material uniform school fee and care about our future. We wish God bless you with happiness and success.

At the end of this letter we would like to apologize for not sending you to the airport because the airport is far away, we have no good transportation to travel there. I hope you don't mind us.

28/10/2023

By :

~~Savy~~ SA ~~Sy~~ Am ~~Ruy~~ R. na ~~Sy~~ Saem ~~chay~~ ~~Phly~~ Piseth
~~for~~ Mengly ~~Danika~~ Danika
~~Vanna~~ Vanna ~~Jay~~ Dana

~~Krouch~~ Krouch ~~Songheng~~ Songheng
~~Sambet~~ Sambet
Sambet

OUR WISH LIST

Since we are a grassroots non profit, we rely on even the smallest donations to make our programs successful. However, even small non profits can dare to dream and we hope to turn these dreams into reality for the upcoming year. Can you help?



High School Scholarships in Siem Reap

Cost: \$25 to \$200/month

We are always looking for funds to cover tuitions for new students. We handpick our students based on academic ability as well as financial need and we send them to the private schools.



University Scholarships in Phnom Penh

Cost: \$50 to \$400/month

We would love to have all our students study in Phnom Penh to pursue advanced degrees. It is simply not possible for our students to pursue many professional careers if they stay in Siem Reap.



School Supplies for High School Students

Cost: \$120/year

At the start of the school year, I usually travel to Cambodia to purchase school supplies. These may include school books, notebooks, pens, backpacks and uniforms.



Laptop computers for University Students

Cost: \$250 to \$400/computer

We provide laptop computers to our university students if they don't already have one. We prefer to purchase locally to support the local businesses in the Siem Reap or Phnom Penh community.



Music Project

Cost: Any donation will help!

The Nirmita Composers Institute organizes workshops to instruct and nurture the next generation of composers in Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia. The donations will go directly towards funding these workshops and their students.

OUR BIG THANKS

Thirteen years ago, we were excited about getting a \$20 donation and we still are! It's true that we make every donation go as far as possible but it costs a lot of money to provide full scholarships to the best schools and employ the people to make all this happen. We are so thankful for the ongoing support that we have received and we look forward to your support for years to come.



Individual donors

Through our scholarship program, we pair up a student with a donor (or donors). These donors give us a yearly lump sum or donate every month. The students communicate to their donors (via the Savong Foundation Cambodia) every three months through letters or videos. .

We are always looking for supporters who would love to help our students and since the Savong Foundation Cambodia is a 501(c)(3), your contributions are tax deductible in the United States.



Corporate donor

iHerb[®]

We are very thankful to iHerb.com for their continued generosity. They have been a huge sponsor for our students and we are honored to be in partnership with them.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US



Siem Reap, Cambodia



phil@savongfoundation.org



www.facebook.com/savongfoundation

OUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM



THE FINANCIALS

The Savong Foundation
Statement of Income and Expenses
January to December 2023

	MGT/ GENERAL	PROGRAM	TOTAL
Income			
General Funds	\$ 36,752.82		\$ 36,752.82
Scholarship Funds	\$ 52.85	\$ 27,079.35	\$ 27,132.00
Interest Earned	\$ 8.80		\$ 8.80
Total Contributed Income	\$ 36,814.27	\$ 27,079.35	\$ 63,893.62

	MGT/ GENERAL	PROGRAM	TOTAL
Expense			
Advertising & Marketing	\$ 2,549.97		\$ 2,549.97
Bank Charges & Fees	\$ 673.91		\$ 673.91
Business Software	\$ 733.85		\$ 733.85
General Fund Expenses	\$ 43.75	\$ 6,495.00	\$ 6,538.75
Accounting Fees	\$ 3,638.00		\$ 3,638.00
Office Expense	\$ 131.36		\$ 131.36
Program Expenses		\$ 17,845.65	\$ 17,845.65
Travel		\$ 6,234.04	\$ 6,234.04
Total Expense	\$ 7,770.84	\$ 30,574.69	\$ 38,345.53

Net Income (Profit) \$ 25,548.09

Program Expense Breakdown:	\$\$	%
School Supplies	\$ 844.65	3%
Student Living Expenses	\$ 1,980.00	6%
Tuition	\$ 15,021.00	49%
Cambodian Salaries	\$ 6,495.00	21%
Travel	\$ 6,234.04	20%
Total:	<u><u>\$ 30,574.69</u></u>	<u><u>100%</u></u>

Percentage Administrative vs. Program 20% 80%

Note: Some Management/General and Travel Expenses were covered by board member contributions.

This report was prepared by Smart Bean Inc.

***No act of kindness, however small is ever wasted.
...Aesop***

