



THE SAVONG FOUNDATION CAMBODIA ANNUAL REPORT 2024



*Phil Caldwell CEO
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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

There is nothing like the experience of travelling for 40 hours, arriving at my hotel in Cambodia to be greeted by smiling students, many of whom I've known for five years or more. It's always an emotional meeting, similar to seeing distant relatives you actually want to visit every year. We take lots of photos and videos, exchange the traditional Khmer greeting, the Sampeah, and occasionally I get a western style hug. These are the hard-working scholarship students of **The Savong Foundation Cambodia** and I make the annual trip to see them, assess how they're doing and pay their school fees for another year. It's always a busy two weeks but these students are worth the time, the effort and the expense.



The Savong Foundation Cambodia is now in its 13th year and we have a small number of very dedicated and generous supporters to thank for it. Our philosophy has always been to support exceptional but finally underprivileged students and focus on paying tuition and sometimes their living expenses if they can't live at home or with relatives. We encourage our students to pursue professional careers which will not only benefit them but also benefit their families and inspire others around them to do the same. All the years of hard work have paid off and we now have students studying **medicine, nursing, pharmacy, engineering, architecture, finance, hospitality and tourism and business management**. We've had successful graduates in **law, accounting, teaching, marketing and global affairs**. Without assistance, these students would spend a lifetime working in the fields or markets with no hope of a better life.

I still remember the first day I met Sokpha. She was terribly shy and her English wasn't very good. She didn't smile and when we took our photo together, she stood awkwardly next to me. She came from a small village near the Vietnam border (that's a long, long way from Siem Reap). This was in 2017 and her father was a farmer who made \$60/month. Her grades were excellent however and despite the lack of communication, I felt she had ambition and a scholarship from us was a way to transform her future. A couple of days later, we gave her the exciting news that we had accepted her application and we put her in a private school in Siem Reap to give her the best education we could find. There's no question that she struggled; it was definitely a tough couple of high school years, but she persevered and passed her Grade 12 government exam.

We were happy that she decided to move to the big lights of Phnom Penh which is a huge step from her village where she grew up. She studied linguistics for two years and then decided to take the medical entrance exam. **This isn't an easy exam, but she passed and is now studying to be a midwife at the Health Science Institute of RCAF in Phnom Penh.** This is truly a remarkable accomplishment coming from such a poor background. Now every time I see her, she is smiling, her English is much better and she beams with confidence. Her future looks bright indeed.

I often joke that the most difficult part of running The Savong Foundation Cambodia is flying in economy for a 17-hour flight, and that only gets me from San Francisco to Singapore. There are two other flights, before and after this long-haul flight, to get me to my destination. Truthfully, the most difficult part, as with most nonprofits, is the money to keep everything going. As a veterinarian in my daily life, I think it would have been easier to raise money for starving street dogs than to raise money for scholarship students in a country that many people couldn't find on a map. **Thankfully, we have had the generosity of iHerb.com which has stood by and supported our students for many years.** Most of our money comes from either monthly donations or one-off donations from the public. For those supporters who are interested, we pair them up with a student so they can follow the student's progress and keep in touch. In return, the student makes a thank you video once or twice a year and of course, studies as hard as possible.



Perhaps the most surprising part of the foundation is that education in Cambodia does not come cheap. **High school tuition (including school supplies which we provide) comes in at roughly \$100/month for the more senior grades and university tuition can be \$1200 to \$1600/year which doesn't include the \$200/month for living expenses which we sometimes provide.** We are always looking for more sustainable ways to finance the foundation (and having graduate students support our current students is part of that plan) but in the meantime, we are looking for donations to fund our scholarship program. It doesn't matter if it's \$20 or \$2000, you can be assured that it will be put to good use with very minimal overhead fees and since we are a 501(c)(3) in the United States, your donations are tax deductible. Please check out our website www.savongfoundation.org for various ways to donate and I thank you in advance.

The Savong Foundation Cambodia will continue its mission to improve young lives in 2025. On this last trip, we only selected one additional student, Vannak, and will focus on our current roster of students as more of high school students enter (expensive) university programs. I would like to thank our only staff member, Rathana, who manages to keep in touch with the students both in Siem Reap and in Phnom Penh and make sure I pay all the tuitions on time. He also keeps me busy during my two weeks in Cambodia but of course, there is always time to sneak away and see a remote temple or two. **It's a cliché to say be we couldn't do this work without YOU.** We hope that you visit Cambodia if you haven't already and if you have, you know what they mean when they call it the "Kingdom of Wonder".

It's a remarkable place filled with people who appreciate the help that we give them. There will be a time when the foundation is a completely Khmer organization but for the time being, I'm very proud of what we have accomplished and look forward to where we are headed.



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

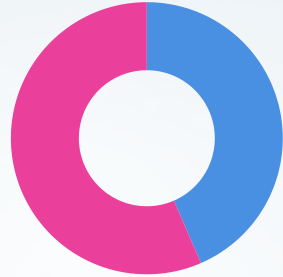
We have partnered with the Nirmita Composers Institute which is dedicated to teaching and nurturing the next generation of Cambodian composers in both the Khmer traditional and Western art music genres. NCI also encourages the cultural exchange among nations in the region and within the global community.



2024: A YEAR IN NUMBERS

23

Scholarships awarded at the start of 2024/25 school year (22 renewed; 1 new)



■ Young Men Scholarships (43.48%)
■ Young Women Scholarships (56.52%)

8

Students in Grades K to 12



15

Students in Post Secondary Education



Total Contributions
\$57,165

UNITED KINGDOM



Canada



from

USA



Australia



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

MEET OUR STUDENT: BUNSAEM

Pheak Bunsuem is studying Veterinary Medicine at the Royal University of Agriculture



Dear Savong Foundation

My name is Pheak Bunsuem, I am 20 years old this year. I have three siblings; I am the second child in the family. I am currently studying at Royal University of Agriculture. I have been attending school for one month in the first semester of the second year.

My studies now are not much of a problem, I just do not have as much time as before because I work after school. This year, I thought I would do an internship at the animal clinic, but contrary to expectations, I had to start school at 8 am and finish at 12 noon, and I had to get ready for work at 1 o'clock, ending at 8pm nights. I work as a teacher of English (Kindergarten level) and Microsoft Office at a school near my university, this job I get paid only \$ 120. The salary from my work cannot support my daily life enough. But fortunately, now that I am staying at the university in the Documentation Center, I do not have to pay for room and water. In the meantime, I may be relocating at the end of January because the room I am staying in will be used as a storage room for the next generation of dissertations. I'm looking for a room to rent near the school, however, I always try my best and take the last time.

BUNSAEM

As for my family situation, it is not so good now because my parents migrated to Thailand and received a low salary of only 300 baht per person (equivalent to \$ 7.5/day). They Need to pay taxes to Thailand and support my younger brother who is in 8th grade and sometimes help me too. All of the above is my situation and my family now.

When all was said and done, I will do my best for my education and my family plus everyone. Finally, I would like to thank The Savong Foundation for sponsoring my education, wish the donors good luck, success in all their endeavors, and God bless you. I am grateful to you all, you're a lifesaver. 🙏

Sincerely,



Bunsuem Pheak



MEET OUR STUDENT: RATTANA

Rattana is studying Pharmacy at the Health Science Institute of RCAF



I am Samnang Rattana. I have 4 siblings (3 sisters 1 brother) and I am a first child in my family . Now I am living in Phnom Penh in rent room (70\$). I am a second year of phamacological skill. I currently study in the first semester of year 2.

For my study I have a bit issue because I never have studied French and need to buy book about 50 \$ per semester. Every day I need to get up at 5:30AM to cook food for breakfast and for launch cause I study both times. My class start at 7:00-11:30AM and 1:00-5:00PM. I go to school at 6:20 AM with my motor. I consider to internships in the pharmacy in the second semester this year. I currently having practice in the laboratory of chemistry and biology. I actively participate in the class, discussion with friends, doing assignment. myself observe with study and enjoying to learn something new. Whether it has some problems, I don't give up. I study hard even though it is in French, I still try it as much as I can like learning through YouTube to grow. In my free time I almost always reading book, write and review the lesson that I studied which help me build my skill and knowledge.

Now a day, my family are living in Siem Reap. My father is a seller. He sells kind of sweet at night start from 4 or 5 Pm until 11 or 12 Pm . My mother is a sell and shelf also. she works almost full day. In the morning, she starts work as a shelf at 9 AM until 4 AM after she finished her work, she always sells sweet at night starts from 5:00or6:00PM until 11PM at Krolanh Market. My sister is studying in grade 11 at Hun Sen Siem Reap high school. My twin is studying in grade 3 at Mok Neak primary school. My parent can earn money perhaps350\$ per month because in Siem Reap has some final issues .

Looking ahead, I have ambition goal for my future career. I want to be a pharmacist in purpose I don't want to see my patient using medicine without discuss with the doctor or pharmacist just use it appear on their experience. I also want to have a pharmacy for my own self.

In this time, I would like to wish all donors successful in your life, get healthy and happiness. The finally I really thank you for supporting to me and also for Cambodian students.

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: \$100/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 or ipads 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 six 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



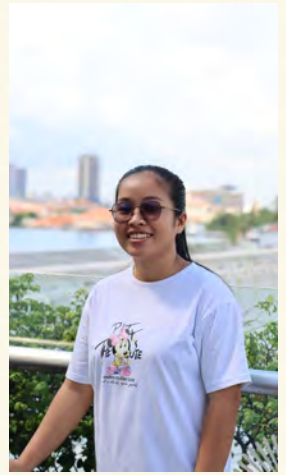
phil@savongfoundation.org



www.facebook.com/savongfoundation

OUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM





THE FINANCIALS

The Savong Foundation Cambodia

Statement of Operations

For the 12 months ended December 31, 2024

Income

Income-General Funds	22,620	39.6%
Income-Scholarship Funds	34,545	60.4%

Total Income

57,165 100%

Program Expenses

Travel	5526
Cambodian Salaries	6000
Scholarship expenses-School supplies	4163
Scholarship expenses-Student living expenses	6228
Scholarship expenses-Tuition	32,844

Total Program Expenses

54,761

Administrative Expenses

Legal and Accounting	3550
Advertising and Marketing	440
License and taxes	735
Postage	166
Bank charges	974
Office	119
Website	809
Social media	260
Computer software	99

Total Administrative Expenses

7152

Ratio of Program vs. Administrative Expenses

88 vs. 12 %

Total Other Income (interest)

191

Net income

(4557)

Prepared by Padgett Business Services



**One child, one teacher, one
pen and one book can
change the world**

– Malala Yousafzai

