



# SAVONG FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2018



# LETTER FROM THE CEO



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

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*Phil Caldwell CEO*

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It has been ten years since my first trip to Cambodia. At that time, there wasn't a Starbucks at the Siem Reap Heritage Walk. There wasn't even a Heritage Walk. Tourists weren't dunking their feet into aquariums so that they could get their skin eaten by "massaging" fish. Pub Street was already blaring out music thanks to the riotous backpacker bars Angkor What? and the Temple Club. Children beggars seemed everywhere and even though they could barely speak English, they still wanted us to know that Obama was the President of the United States.

And of course, I had no idea that I would start a nonprofit supporting Cambodian youth two years later.



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The Savong Foundation is now in its eighth year and what an incredible wild TukTuk ride it has been.

I remember all the early challenges; the grainy skype calls that were often dropped, the difficulty of finding regular donors, the banking frustrations, the cultural misunderstandings and even a particularly stressful fundraiser called Comedy for Cambodia which I very nearly missed thanks to the crazy Los Angeles traffic.

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We were also trying to do too many things in the earlier days.

We built water pumps in the countryside, tried our hand at making jewelry and ran the Savong Student Center which was a living/learning center for our scholarship students. These projects were later abandoned to focus our efforts on what really mattered; giving our students the best education we could find while keeping costs as low as possible.

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And our students have really flourished!

Many of these kids come from the countryside and their parents are farmers, barely bringing in \$100/month for their hard labor. Without education, the children were destined to a similar fate but now they are in university studying Marketing, World Affairs, Teaching, Accounting, Information Technology, Law and Pharmacy.



Not only are they improving their own lives but they are improving the lives of their families and paving the way for other kids who can see the value of a great education.

Even though we support a very limited number of students, I firmly believe that our circle of influence is much, much bigger and we're positively impacting the lives of people we haven't even met.

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I am certainly proud of what we have accomplished but there is no way we could have done it without our generous and loyal donors. Some of our sponsors have been around since the very beginning and have religiously donated every month for years without fail. Others have given us a lump sum at the beginning of each year. We require that the students write letters to their sponsors every three months and relationships have developed over the years, sometimes between people that haven't even met. It's a family that reaches across oceans and borders and with so many ways to spend money in today's world, we are truly humbled that our sponsors have chosen our students to support.

I would like to make a special mention about iHerb.com which is our corporate donor. They have been unwavering in their generosity and have allowed us to send several students to private high school and university. They have other projects in Cambodia and we have learned so much from their team by comparing stories and laughing about some of the lessons that we have been forced to swallow over the years.

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With such support, we owe it to our students and our sponsors to make the Savong Foundation as successful as possible.

We have done this in the past by streamlining our mission to find the most underprivileged students who understand the value of advanced education and give them unbroken support. We understand the value of each donated dollar; we have minimal overhead, employing only one paid manager and all our board members are volunteer. We encourage and motivate our students with monthly meetings, bringing in professionals who show them what their future could be like. We offer them a network of help if they have problems with their school or family life. We are as transparent as possible, both in how we operate but also in how much money passes through our hands.

And we keep the nonprofit small and manageable. We will never support thousands of students in a generic kind of way. I prefer to know all the students personally and consider them part of my Cambodian family. I want them to succeed just as if they were my own children and I know my other board members feel the same way.

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2019 has already descended upon us and the high school students have been busy at their school for months. All of our university students have immersed themselves into their studies, school budgets have been set for another school year and yearly donations have been renewed. I'm just about to label a new binder with another title: Savong Foundation 2019 and add it to my collection. I'm sure there will be more.

Until next year.

Akun!

Dr. Phil Caldwell



# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to support underprivileged students in northern Cambodia through education, shelter and healthcare.



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

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

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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 in Siem Reap, the IQ International School 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.



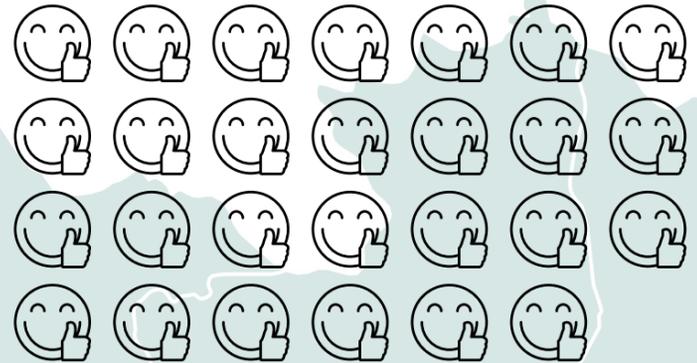
### Music Program

The Nimita Composers Institute is dedicated to 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.

# 2018: A YEAR IN NUMBERS

# 27

Scholarships awarded at the start of 2018/19 school year (6 of them were new)



- Young Men Scholarships (40.74%)
- Young Women Scholarships (59.26%)

# 16

Students in Grades K to 12



# 11

Students in University



2018 Graduates from High School

# 4



2018 Graduates from University

# 1



Total Contributions  
**\$40,448**

from

Canada

USA

Japan

Australia

Singapore



Over 92% of your donations went directly towards supporting our education and community programs!

# 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 \$100/month

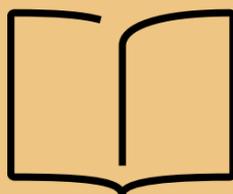
We are always looking for funds to cover tuitions for new students. We handpick our students based on academic ability as well as financial need and we send them to the Future Bright International High School.



## ***University Scholarships in Phnom Penh***

Cost: \$100 to \$200/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 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 Composers Institute organizes workshops to nurture the next generation of composers in Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia. The donations will go directly towards funding these workshops.

# THEIR STORIES: THEIR THANK YOUS

*These are just two of the letters from our students to their sponsors.*

Dear C.

How are you these days? In here, I am so wonderful. Everything goes well with me. I mean my studying and social life, and both are better than before. I extremely love my classes and both professors. You know, they are very funny and I love their teaching; however the problem is still too much homework. Even though everything is so funny and I wish you were here laughing with me and the other children in the NGO. All the best with your works and lives.

I look forward to hearing from you again.

Lots of love.

S.

Dear N.

Hello, how are you doing? I hope you are well. For me I am very well but I am really missing my parents also. I have told you already about my work. I work 8 hours a day so it is a long time for me. I start work at 1:45 and finish work at 10:15 and I have 30 minute break for dinner. So I got salary \$120 a month and I spend for rent house and utility \$40 and last month I bought a new phone and I need to pay \$26 a month . About my education, I have many friends at university and they are friendly and kind. I completed term 2 and going to term 3. I don't have anything to give you back but I just say thank you very much for supporting me until now and I hope you are supporting me until I get a good job.

I love you so much.

Best regards, Y.



# OUR BIG THANKS

Nearly eight 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) every three months through letters that they write.

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



## Corporate donors

**iHerb<sup>®</sup>**

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](mailto:phil@savongfoundation.org)

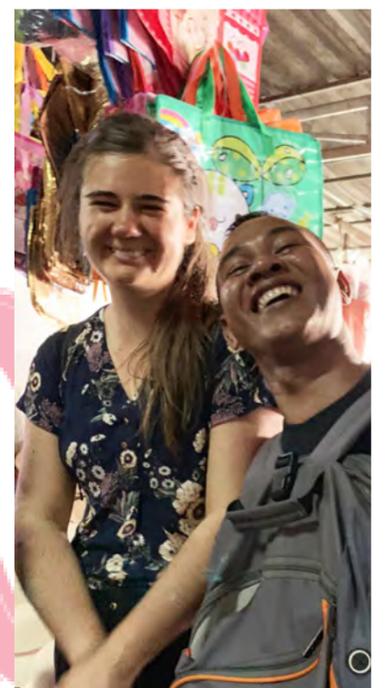


[www.facebook.com/savongfoundation](http://www.facebook.com/savongfoundation)



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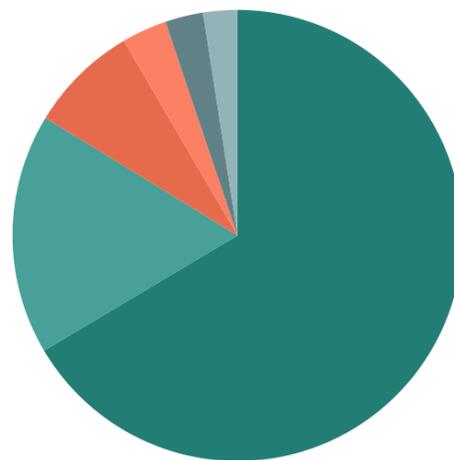
# OUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM



# THE FINANCIALS

Total contributions for 2018 \$40,448

Program breakdown for 2018



■ Scholarships (66.47%)

■ General Cambodian Program (17.25%)

■ Salaries (7.84%)

■ Community Medical Outreach (3.24%)

■ Student Living Expenses (2.74%)

■ School supplies (2.45%)



Over 92% of 2018 public contributions went to program expenses.



All travel expenses were paid by the individual board members.



We are very proud of our platinum level GuideStar participant award which means that we are committed to transparency!

<http://www.guidestar.org/profile/27-3567820>