Annual Report 2020
Dear supporters,

2020, for all of us, has been unprecedented. It’s been a challenge. But we’ve made it through and we couldn’t be prouder of our students and our team for their resilience and never ending enthusiasm. The year started off on a high. With our goal of broadening our reach and increasing our impact in mind, the sports team set out to develop relationships with other local schools and they successfully agreed partnerships with 6 government primary schools in the area. Our social worker, Kong, continued to deliver child protection workshops to parents and other adults in the village, and a brand new initiative focussed on reducing waste and improving the local environment was launched.

In early March covid-19 cases were on the rise, and sadly after a couple of months of exciting developments, the Ministry of Education instructed us to close our school. The uncertainty of what was to come weighed on everyone’s minds. While we couldn’t continue in our normal capacity, we were determined to find a way to safely support our students. Following many discussions and compromises, permission was granted for our teachers to visit students at home. And our home-schooling programme was born!

Home-school was thankfully, a success! We were pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm the students displayed at seeing their teachers and being given the opportunity to learn again, parents were supportive of the new initiative and the teachers were thrilled to be back doing what they love. However, as time went on, parents were losing what little work they’d previously had, travel was restricted and there was little sign of schools re-opening. Some families understandably grew more concerned for their livelihoods, and as a result, some of our older students were sent out to forage for fruits or seek work wherever they could. We began to see less and less of some of these students, and despite re-arranging home-school times to suit them, it had little impact.

Amazingly, amongst all the upheaval, three of our scholarship recipients graduated from University. An incredible achievement at the best of times, but we are especially proud of them given the circumstances.

When the news came that we could re-open school in September, we couldn’t have been happier! After lots of thorough scrubbing and amendments to our health and hygiene policies, we welcomed our students back onto school site on 7th September. It was no real surprise to us that attendance levels were initially very low. Our social worker Kong arranged meetings with the absent students and their families to discuss their individual situations and help them find solutions, so their children could return to school. We slowly started to see an increase in student numbers and by the beginning of November we had 100% of our students back in school. This was a huge achievement, we are incredibly grateful to Kong for all her effort and perseverance, and we’re so proud of our students for not giving up!

Returning to provide our full programme including daily nutritious breakfasts and a more rounded education programme was as relief to everyone. The re-opening of schools also enabled the sports team to re-focus on developing the Goals for Girls initiative which you can read more about later in our report.

Unfortunately, the highs of being back at school were soon shattered, as in mid-November a new spate of cases in Cambodia meant that schools were again closed. With all the disruption from this past year, instead of beginning our new school year in November as normal, the start of the new school year has been pushed back to February. Thankfully we were able to visit families at home to start the process of registering new students during this closure time, and our goal is to recruit 50 new students for the start of the year.

Looking to the year ahead, we are primarily focussed on bringing back routine to our students lives, and ensuring their education and development is on track. As always, we pride ourselves on continuous development and we are also focussed on increasing our reach to the wider community, hoping to give a helping hand to more and more people. In spite of some positives, this rollercoaster year has been very challenging for the Cambodia Community Project. The pandemic has effected everyone around the world. Without our usual volunteers and with some long-term donors no longer being able to support us, we are in real need of increased funding to sustain and continue developing our programme. We are incredibly grateful for any and all donations, and hope you are able to support us through this challenging time.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Sopheap, Jess, and everyone at the Globalteer Cambodia Community Project.
Helping Hands school, the focal point of our operations, was founded by Australian photographer Deborah Groves, in 2005. The community wished for the local provision of health care and education, so with their help she built the school in 2006. In April 2013, Helping Hands handed over its management to UK registered charity Globalteer (charity no. 1119706), and it has grown sustainably to the holistic, community-led education and development work that we deliver today.

The Helping Hands school operates in the rural village of Prasat Char, about 25km from Siem Reap Town, Cambodia. We provide a supplementary Education Programme to 300+ children between the ages of 4 and 20. We teach the local language (Khmer), English, Maths, Sports, Arts and Crafts, Music, Dance, and Health and Hygiene. We also run a Food and Farming Programme in which we provide daily, nutritious breakfasts made with organic vegetables grown on-site at the school. We provide health and social care to our students, and also have a University Scholarship Programme to encourage our students to pursue further education.

Having built up years of trust within the local community, we are able to increase our reach to parents and other schools in the area. We offer workshops to parents and other local adults, and collaborate with neighbouring schools to offer sports lessons. Our goal is more than just teaching children English or Khmer, we strive to build up the pride and dignity of individuals, families and the village community as a whole.

Aims & Objectives

Our aim is to provide locally staffed projects where village children can receive free supplementary education. A place they can learn new skills that will lead to opportunities for a self-reliant and sustainable future, breaking the cycle of poverty. Through providing education and life skills we help communities to help themselves.

Education:
We teach up to 300 students between the ages of 4 and 20 years old, from 7:30a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday. Our students receive on-site lessons in Khmer Literacy, Numeracy, English Language, Creative Arts, Sports, Health and Hygiene and Life Skills. Additionally, we run workshops for parents and other adults in the local community.

Scholarships
We provide Scholarships for University and Vocational Training Courses to up to ten young adults from the village yearly. We support them through the application process, with school fees, educational materials and emergency medical care.

Health Care:

Nutritional Health
We provide a healthy and nutritious breakfast to around 100 students daily. The breakfast is prepared within the guidelines of the World Food Program and contains vegetables from our own onsite organic garden.

Medical Health and Hygiene
We teach weekly Health and Hygiene lessons, and practice hand-washing and tooth brushing daily on site. We provide first-aid treatment on site, and transport to the free children’s hospital in Siem Reap for students who require more urgent medical care. We also provide toothbrushes, toothpaste and dental treatment.

Social Work:
We build up and maintain trusting relationships with our students and their families, to help work through any issues such as low attendance, to ensure that students can keep attending both the Government School and Helping Hands.

Uniforms
We provide all students with a tailored school uniform at the start of the school year. This school uniform is essential for our students to attend their half day Government School. The uniforms are made and printed by a locally run organisation training disadvantaged young adults. We also provide necessary educational supplies such as pens, pencils and notebooks.
The Year in Numbers

**EDUCATION**
- **346** students enrolled at Helping Hands
- **3** University Students graduated including **1** Masters degree student

**BREAKFAST PROGRAMME**
- **Over 16,000** nutritious meals served
- **Over 600kg** of organic vegetables grown on-site at Helping Hands

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**
- **Over 700** toothbrushes distributed
- **All 346** students back in school after the initial closure, thanks to Social Worker Kong.

**SPORTS PROGRAMME**
- **10** female students from Helping Hands enrolled on the Goals for Girls initiative.
- **6** local primary schools signed up to receive regular sports sessions.

**FINANCES**
- **Total Income**: $37,107
- **Total Expenditure**: $34,640

**LOCALS EMPLOYED**
- **12**

**ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS**
- **12**
Green Initiatives
Improving and protecting the local environment.

In February we launched a new initiative to improve the environment in and around the village. We invited our older students to share their ideas and creativity; our Green Team was born! This group of students are leading the way in the fight against plastic and rubbish in our community. Through education and clean ups around the school and village, they hope to encourage their peers, families, and others in the community to take responsibility for their environment.

Our Green Team then set out to educate and raise awareness amongst the villagers. They led the rest of our students through the village, clearing up the rubbish as they went, making sure to separate items they could recycle. Despite the hard work and hot sun, our students had a great time sharing their knowledge on plastic and the environment, and making their village a cleaner space!

Having completed a workshop on the detrimental impacts of plastic on our environment, the team worked with Director Sopheap and the rest of the staff to educate their fellow students on recycling, re-using and reducing the use of plastic where possible.

One of the first things put in place was a ban on plastic at school (with the exception of plastic bottles which can be re-used to fill up on water).

Despite all the setbacks of 2020, when Helping Hands re-opened in September, our sports team successfully launched our new initiative: Goals for Girls. This project works to promote gender equality and female empowerment amongst young girls, using sports as the basis to workshops and activities.

The focus is on teaching the girls skills in leadership, team work and event planning, whilst also working to improve their confidence and self-esteem.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the project was limited to a soft launch, and therefore works solely with 10 Helping Hands students. Sessions have been running four times a month, and are already a success - the girls have really thrived on being immersed in the project and the difference in their demeanor is clear!

As we look forward to 2021, we’re now working on refining the content and material for these sessions, coming up with more original activities to keep the girls engaged. We will also be increasing the number of participants in the project, to include young females from other schools in the local area.
Thinking Outside the Box - A New Form of Support

The Pandemic. School’s are Closed. What’s next?

When a few cases of covid-19 began emerging in Cambodia, the government were very quick to act. One of the first precautions they took in March, was to close all schools and universities across Cambodia.

Initially, we didn’t know what to do. School stood empty. Staff and students didn’t know how to fill their day. We were concerned for the welfare of our students. Concerned that without a nutritious breakfast at school they may go hungry, concerned that without adequate soap and clean water they may be at increased risk of contracting the disease or other illnesses, and concerned that they may be put to work, and fall back in their development. We were forced to think outside the box. Our normal programme couldn’t continue but how could we continue supporting our students and their families through this difficult time?

After many (safely distanced) meetings between staff, a plan was formed. Our gardener and cook continued to work on the garden; planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. Without the added task of cooking breakfast they were able to increase productivity in the garden, producing lots of fresh vegetables to share amongst the team and the villagers.

Then after even more discussions between the villagers, the Village Chief and Commune Leader, we were granted permission to visit our students in their homes. Each visit began with thorough handwashing and a health and hygiene refresher, before sitting down to discuss how the students and their families were coping. Our staff then gave a short lesson, reviewing homework, introducing new topics and vocabulary and setting new work to be completed before their next visit. The sports team also ran small, socially distanced sports classes with neighbouring houses. Getting the kids active and seeing them have fun lifted everyone’s spirits! The children’s positivity and motivation to keep learning throughout the school closure was an inspiration to us all.

The beginning of September brought the long-awaited news that school could re-open, so following a deep clean and review of hygiene protocols we welcomed students back on site on September 7th.

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Gruduations Galore!

Our work doesn’t stop when students leave Helping Hands. We’ve long been committed to supporting youths from the community through further education and training.

**Teacher Dalie Graduates!**

Former Helping Hands student and current employee Dalie, successfully completed her Bachelor Degree in Banking and Accounting in July this year.

Dalie is a true inspiration, as well as working full-time alongside her studies, Dalie was then faced with the challenge of studying and completing her last few months online when schools and universities were closed.

Internet connections in the village are slow at best, but more often than not, are hard to come by in the village, but Dalie persevered, often travelling into Siem Reap for a better connection, to ensure she completed her course and her final dissertation.

Due to the knock on effects of the pandemic, Dalie is still waiting to receive her results, but we’re all confident she has passed with flying colours!

**Former Student Khun Graduates!**

Former Helping Hands student Khun successfully completed his Bachelor Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language this summer. Whilst studying, Khun had lots of opportunity to practice his English skills as he worked as a guide for Artisans D’Angkor. Not satisfied with his already busy schedule, Khun also began training to be an official tour guide for the Angkor Wat temple complex!

Sadly, due to the pandemic and lack of tourists, Artisan’s D’Angkor was forced to close and Khun is currently unemployed. He is still eager to follow his dream of being a teacher, and with his degree results due next month and Khun’s determination and enthusiasm he will be sure to find a new role soon.

**Our First Masters Graduate!**

Lyheang was our very first scholarship recipient to study for a Masters degree. Lyheang is very ambitious, and after completing his Bachelors degree he was eager to continue his studies and obtain a Masters of Finance. And he’s done it! Lyheang currently works in a finance role for the Angkor Hospital for Children, which he loves. Huge congratulations Lyheang, you should be very proud of your achievements!
We are incredibly grateful to all our supporters, your partnership really is crucial to the ongoing success of our work. In spite of the pandemic and the knock on effects on travel, we were lucky to have some truly special people supporting us this year. Here is a snapshot of some of our supporters and the amazing work they have been doing.

Group Volunteering

In February we welcomed a group of 12 employees from Amigo Loans in the UK to volunteer at Helping Hands. Their sheer enthusiasm to get involved in all aspects of the school was clear long before they landed in Siem Reap. They spent the months prior to their trip fundraising and collecting books, stationery and all sorts of other supplies to support our day to day running.

On arrival the Amigo team immediately got stuck in to adding some colour to one of our classroom walls. Bright colourful fruits, vegetables and numbers now adorn our wall and are an excellent resource for teaching our younger students! The team also got busy watering and weeding in the garden, supporting teachers in English and sports classes and setting up arts and crafts activities.

From the funds they raised, to their on-site support and creative mural painting, this group of volunteers have definitely left a lasting impact on our students and staff.

A big thank you to each of the volunteers, and to everyone at Amigo Loans for your support.

NGO Assistant Intern

Ruaridh first landed in Siem Reap at the beginning of 2020 with the intention of spending 3-6 months doing an internship as our NGO Assistant. But as covid-19 cases rose around the world, and uncertainty was looming, Ruaridh, along with most of our interns, was drawn back home to be with family, putting his Cambodian dreams aside for a while.

Only a few months later, and despite the pandemic showing little sign of letting up, Ruaridh made the brave decision to return to Cambodia and see out his internship. We of course couldn’t be happier to have Ruaridh onboard, and although he’s working with us under the title of NGO Assistant, he’s more than willing to try his hand at anything and everything!

“Since arriving back in Cambodia in August, I’ve been focused mainly on a school uniform distribution project aimed at removing barriers to education in the Prasat Char community. We were initially nervous that pandemic-generated economic worries might damage rural families’ commitments to education, but instead we’ve seen Helping Hands grow to welcome 52 new students since the restrictions eased!”

Ruaridh’s hard work has paid off and we’re thrilled that the funding for the school uniforms has been secured!

“Thanks to the incredible work of our staff, students and parents, I’m now fully confident that our community’s dedication to learning will survive anything that Covid-19 might yet throw at it.”

A huge thank you to Ruaridh for all his hard work, perseverance and enthusiasm!
A Heartfelt Thank You to all of our Helping Hands:
our donors, volunteers and supporters over the past year.


A special thank you goes to The Sol Foundation for continuing to fund our Sports Programme. Thank you also to all of our anonymous donors - your support is enormously appreciated.

All care is taken to ensure we name our supporters, however please accept our sincerest apologies if we have neglected to credit anyone.
Give a Helping Hand

Despite all the challenges of last year we have continued to push forward, developing our programme, broadening our reach, and ultimately increasing our impact. However, we are still facing an uphill battle. Without volunteers and with some long-term donors no longer being able to support us, we really need all the help we can get.

**Donate:** You can help us by making a donation today. We welcome all donations, no matter the amount. We are particularly grateful for recurring donations, which really help us to ensure sustainability of our Programme, helping us to plan for the long term and allowing us to spend less time focusing on marketing and fundraising, instead focussing on providing the best possible education and care to our students.

[www.globalteer.org/helpinghands/donate](http://www.globalteer.org/helpinghands/donate)

**Fundraise:** You may not personally be able to financially support us, but you can still give us a helping hand to fundraise, anything from organising a virtual quiz night, or selling old clothes online can raise valuable funds to support our day to day running. Get in touch today to let us know how we can support you with fundraising ideas or marketing materials.

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**Spread the word:** Tell your friends, families and colleagues about who we are and what we do, perhaps tell them why you support us and what our project means to you.

**Volunteer:** Although global travel isn’t possible right now, we’re looking forward to welcoming volunteers back to Cambodia in the not too distant future. It’s not too soon to start planning, whether you have an interest in supporting our English Classes, giving a helping hand to our Gardeners, or getting active with our Sports Programme, get in touch today to find out more!

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**Contact Us**

Visit our website, follow our social media pages, or contact us today to find out more about our Cambodia Community Project and the ways you can help!

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*Helping Hands is a Cambodian registered NGO and is part of Globalteer, registered UK charity 1119706.*