

2023 POST TRIP REPORT

PROJECT BATTAMBANG

est. 2010



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INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the need for improved healthcare and education systems in Cambodia, Project Battambang was born from of a collective desire to make a positive impact and address the challenges faced by underserved populations in the Poipet community.

Over time, members of the project became aware that continuous provision of support and aid would become unfeasible in the long run. As such, Project Battambang has looked to place a stronger focus on sustainability and long-term partnerships in Poipet, striving to empower the local youth and foster social change.

At its core, Project Battambang tries to empower the community through the following various ways:



1

Supporting Local Systems:

Project Battambang collaborates with local healthcare and educational institutions to make it more accessible to its people. This includes provision of primary healthcare to its people and resources to schools to make the learning environment safer and more conducive.

2

Sustainable Partnerships:

The project focuses on building enduring partnerships with local organisations and community leaders, such as the Mother of Peace Kindergarten (MOPK) and Love Without Boundaries (LWB). By fostering strong relationships, Project Battambang ensures that its interventions are sustainable and have a lasting impact.

3

Youth Empowerment:

In the pursuit of social change, Project Battambang persists in its belief in the potential of youth. Anchored in the provision of educational opportunities and active engagement in community development initiatives, the project envisions young individuals as vital agents for positive change in Poipet.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic having passed and Project Battambang having gone on a recent trip prior to this, the long-standing effects of the hiatus were still evident in the preparations for this trip. After experiencing first-hand the challenges that the previous trip had to offer, this iteration of Project Battambang knew that there were still huge steps to be taken to reforge lost connections and regain trust amongst local communities.

In the face of such a big hurdle, the project team remained optimistic and took this as an opportunity to reflect on our past work, seeking to incorporate aspects of sustainability all while rebuilding the project. Examples of such aspects being: **Coming up with a more reliable referral system for patients, recruitment of a permanent self-sustaining Cambodian committee for future generations of the project, and re-evaluating the needs of the villages we serve.**

On this recent trip, the project continued to build upon the bonds and understanding of needs that we achieved from the previous trip. Bigger emphasis was placed on action this time, using the knowledge that we gained to innovate new ideas to leave a longer-lasting impact on the local community. Broadening our outreach, we brought our health screenings to the locals this time, serving new villages and local schools, and specially tailoring our screenings to the needs of each place that we served.

As Project Battambang continues to evolve in response to the ever-changing needs of the community, it remains resolute in its dedication to core values. Having conducted two successful trips since the outlined events, Project Battambang is not only building on its past achievements but is also forging new paths.



MISSION

We resolve to improve the provision of healthcare and education through partnerships and support the local systems, and to empower youth to effect greater social awareness and responsibility within the community.



VISION

We envision an independent community where everyone has the liberty and means to hope for and achieve a better future together.

VALUES: LIBRAS

Love	<i>Loving the people we serve and our team members</i>
Integrity	<i>Being consistent and truthful</i>
Beneficence	<i>For the benefit of community</i>
Respect	<i>Our beneficiaries as equal partners</i>
Accountability	<i>Staying accountable to our beneficiaries and partners</i>
Sustainability	<i>Consider long-term benefits</i>

FOREWORD: BATTAMBANG BEGINNINGS



It has been a joy and honour to return to Poipet, Cambodia with Project Battambang, since my last trip there in 2012 for the LADS camp. Project Battambang has always held a cherished place in my heart, particularly because my team and I were among the pioneering group of NUS YLLSOM medical students to collaborate with the Sisters of the Catholic Church in Poipet.

Since my last visit, I've witnessed several notable changes in the landscape of Poipet: Every Cambodian now possesses a cell phone, marking a significant advancement in technology accessibility, while electricity has become more readily available. The Church has transitioned from its previous location in the city of Poipet to a new site adjacent to Mother of Peace Kindergarten, fostering a vibrant and robust community of believers.

“
*May it serve as a
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kindness, thereby
fostering a brighter
future for all.*

”
Dr Lin Zhi Min

The Kindergarten now operates independently under Cambodian leadership, boasting a cohort of healthy and joyful children. **Numerous LADS scholars have pursued higher education opportunities and returned to Poipet to contribute to the development of their hometown,** leaving a lasting impact on society. Our collaboration has flourished, with Cambodian medical students actively participating as fellow collaborators in various project initiatives, contributing to the planning and execution of programs. The capabilities of our medical students have expanded significantly, allowing for the planning and implementation of comprehensive screening programs and the production of high-quality documentaries, among other achievements.

In addition to these tangible developments, our relationships have deepened over time: Friendships between Singaporeans and Cambodians have blossomed, fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding. Our network of doctors from both Singapore and Cambodia has expanded, with individuals eager to lend their support to our cause in Poipet.

Despite these advancements, some fundamental aspects remain unchanged: the unwavering passion of all involved in serving and improving the lives of the people of Poipet, be it Singaporeans or Cambodians.

Reflecting on these transformations, I am filled with a sense of optimism. While challenges in healthcare accessibility persist in Poipet, the myriad changes witnessed indicate that Project Battambang has profoundly impacted countless lives in ways we may not have initially envisioned.

I earnestly hope that the dedication and enthusiasm displayed by all involved will continue to fuel our collective desire to make the world a better place. May it serve as a reminder to each of us to give back to our communities altruistically and to perpetuate acts of kindness, thereby fostering a brighter future for all.



Dr. Lin Zhi Min
*Founding Batch of Project
Battambang*

TIMELINE

2011

- Introduction of Light- A-Dream scholarship
- Introduction of Teachers' Support Programme
- Formation of survey committee to find out the non-medical concerns of the villages we served
- Hired translators

2013

- Introduction of LADS Camp
- Health screening expanded to serve 1595 villagers
- Cambodian wing of the project run entirely by student volunteers from UHS and IU

2015

- Eye screening services were introduced and prescription glasses were provided as required
- Project Battambang Cambodian Committee established
- Provision of water pots in Prey Koup

2010

- Inception of Project Battambang, born from a vision of Dr Ong and five Year Two medical students
- Provision of Health Screening services and health education
- Served 201 villagers across 4 villages

2012

- LIBRAS, our 6 guiding values, was created along with our vision and mission
- Establishment of Screening Referral programme
- Mobile screenings were established for patients who were unable to come to our screening sites

2014

- Introduction of dental services
- Graduation of 2 LADS scholars, 2 Graduating doctors return to volunteer in screenings
- Collaboration with SEVA Cambodia
- Introduction of Participatory Learning and Action Toolkit (PLA) during surveys

2016

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IU, formally outlining Singaporean and Cambodian committees' support for Project Battambang
- Provision of supplemental waterpots

2018

- Expansion of dental screenings; established partnerships with two local dental clinics
- Established partnership with local optic shop, Heng Optic
- Implementation of SSP -funding the construction of a well and a toilet in Santipheap school Introduction of buddy system with LADS scholars

2020

- Rise of COVID-19
- Unable to travel to Cambodia
- Maintained contact with our Cambodian committee
- Fund-raising efforts

2022

- Resumption of Cambodia trips
- Health screenings
- Door to door surveys and groundwork to find out what has changed over the years

2017

- Teacher's Support Programme (TSP) replaced by School Support Programme (SSP)
- Health Education Day established
- More robust chronic disease management system; Telehealth and prescription cards
- Introduction of Door-To-Door Groundwork methodology during surveys

2019

- Expansion into new villages for health screenings
- Door-to-door Needs Assessment surveys using Magpi app
- Restructuring of survey committee into development committee
- Development of health education syllabus

2021

- With COVID-19 travel restrictions persisting, we continued our support remotely through our COVID relief support programme and engaged with the LADS scholars over Zoom. We continued to fund-raise locally as well

2023

- Collaboration with Love Without Boundaries (LWB) to organise health screenings for both of their schools
- Battambus mobile screening at Dong Aranh Village, including a team that travelled door-to-door
- Re-establishment of a permanent Cambodian Committee



SCREENING

Our screening committee is responsible for the planning and execution of the health screening conducted in Poipet which aims to make medical services accessible, affordable, and comprehensive to increase the overall health in these communities.

OVERVIEW

This year, we conducted mass health screenings at three different locations - **Love Without Boundaries School, Mother Of Peace Kindergarten and Phum Dong Aranh Village** - over 5 days, screening a total of 764 villagers. Having left Phum Dong Aranh village for a few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we conducted a pre-screening survey of the households to reassess their needs. Together with the Development Committee, detailed information such as household income, governmental aid, access to basic daily amenities and behavioural risks were collected from the villagers. These provided a more holistic insight into the lives and struggles of the villagers, including the diseases and diagnoses they currently have. Being a relatively well-to-do village in the region, the data collected from Phum Dong Aranh will be used as a benchmark for assessing the needs of future villages that we intend to conduct health screenings and bring aid to.



PRE-SCREENING

Prior to the trip, we sought to finalise the stations and screening flow, to efficiently screen as many villagers as we could across a short time. To help us achieve this, we are grateful to have the insights of our **Cambodian comm** in advising us and helping to translate our screening forms.

We conducted our **mock health screening in Singapore** to familiarise the committee with the different stations of the health screening. Additionally, this enabled us to get a rough gauge of the amount of time we would need to run the screening. We also ensured our existing equipment was working and procured a list of additional logistics for the health screening. We were also always in contact with the Cambodian committee to ensure that there was coordination between both ends.

Other pre-screening preparations included setting up the locations when we were at the village itself and providing briefings to the volunteers.



STATIONS AND FLOW

Our screening process in MOPK and Dong Aranh involved initial **registration**, including the identification of basic details and screening for potential tuberculosis cases. Registered villagers then proceeded to **triage**, where vital signs were measured, height and weight recorded, and Cambodian volunteers were essential in allowing us to understand the villagers' medical conditions. Individuals with eye conditions received detailed examinations from Singaporean optometrists.

Following triage, villagers visited the **Education Booth**, focusing on chronic condition prevention and management. Interactive posters enhanced understanding, preparing them to manage potential chronic conditions. Subsequently, villagers had **consultations with Singaporean doctors**, including physical examinations and point-of-care tests if needed. The Cambodian volunteers assisted in explaining prescribed medications at the **Pharmacy station**.

In LWB, a similar screening flow was implemented with slight modifications for children. Additional measures included a **Snellens' Eye Test and dental care-focused education at the Education Booth**. Interactive tools, such as toothbrushing stations, enhanced the learning experience. At the Doctors' Consultation area, physical examinations ensured proper development in children.

Due to the high prevalence of hair lice among children, a trial of a **Hair Lice Washing Station** was introduced, accompanied by education on proper hair washing techniques and the provision of relevant medications. The Pharmacy station offered a mixture of prebiotics and probiotics for the children's health support.



SCREENING- REFERRALS



Optician

This year, we had a three-pronged approach to alleviating vision problems faced by the villagers. Firstly, we had the privilege of inviting **2 optometrists**, Nate and Keli, on our trip with us. With their added expertise, we were able to conduct **more meticulous vision checks** on the villagers that we screened. This helped us identify diagnoses such as cataracts and refractive errors, which we were unable to diagnose previously. Secondly, we received a generous sponsorship of 300 reading glasses from Sightonomy, greatly benefiting villagers who were identified to require glasses during our health screening. Last but not least, villagers who were identified with myopia or astigmatism were enrolled under our extended Referral Program. They were brought to a local optometrist to be prescribed spectacles.

Poipet Referral Hospital:

Due to limited equipment, we referred **children and adults alike to PRH** for both dental and medical care for cases in which we lacked the diagnostic equipment or relevant medications. With the help of Dr Ailica who worked with the local doctors to interpret X-rays, ECGs, and angiograms, we were able to diagnose and provide medications for patients suffering from a variety of conditions. This included two tuberculosis patients and an elderly lady who had a hip fracture, amongst other cases.



POST-SCREENING

During this trip, we had the privilege of inviting 7 doctors and 2 optometrists. We had **Dr Wong, Dr Goh, Dr Zhi Min, Dr Anne, Dr Grace, Dr Min Li, Dr Ailica** as well as **Nate and Keli, our optometrists**.

With the desire to do their best for the patients, the doctors and optometrists worked long hours. Seeing them give their best and to even go as far as ensuring a good and sustainable referral system, we were humbled and inspired by their strong desires to give their patients the best outcomes. With their passion and guidance, we hope to embark on subsequent screenings with a newfound purpose. Ultimately, we will always fall back on our collective hearts to serve - to put love above all else and do what's best for the patients.

Having re-established our presence in the villages post-COVID, we hope to re-connect with NGOs and hospitals we had previously worked with to ensure affordable and accessible healthcare for the villagers.

Buoyed by the healthcare improvements in Dong Aranh, MOPK and LWB, we hope to **expand into new villages** which may require more urgent support.

Lastly, as we continue to strive towards sustainability, we hope to explore the possibility of working with the village doctors and pharmacies to better equip them with the network and knowledge required to manage the healthcare needs of their community.





LOGISTICS

Our logistics committee is involved in the sourcing, procuring and management of the drugs required to operate the pharmacy, as well as running of the pharmacy.

OVERVIEW

Although the Logistics committee tends to work behind the scenes, we work hard to make the dreams of Project Battambang come to life. Our role comprises both **detailed preparations before the trip and executing the proposed plans during the trip.**

Prior to the trip, we were responsible for planning the accommodations, transport and most importantly the logistics. From the hand gloves to the asthma inhalers, we prepared and packed all the necessary medications and screening logistics required to run a smooth and successful screening.

During our trip itself, the logistics committee ran the pharmacy during screenings, with the objective of efficiently and reliably dispensing medicine to the people of Poipet.

Overall, we made it a point to foolproof our planning so that our trip could go smoothly. We also emphasised on ensuring that our funds were used wisely, comparing costs across different companies.



OPERATING THE PHARMACY

The smooth dispensing of medications is attributed to a two step process. Firstly, before the trip, we developed a **comprehensive list of medications** we would order, derived from the conversations we had with our volunteer doctors as well as the statistics we gathered from screenings over the past years. Secondly, during the trip itself, we **purchased and packaged the medications** to ensure maximum efficiency for our screening days.

The Logistics team also remained versatile to suit the needs of the various screenings that we had run. During our screenings held in LWB, an NGO-run school for under-privileged children, we liaised with the Principal of the school and learned that hair lice and worm infections were apparent. Hence, we prepared the logistics accordingly and held hair lice shampooing stations and provided albendazole medication for the worm infections. Furthermore, during our Battambus screenings, a new mobile screening initiative, we worked with the doctors to work out the logistics required to have a team move door-to-door to provide first line healthcare to the locals.

SUSTAINABILITY/ FUTURE DIRECTION

In the coming year, the logistics committee would like to establish Memorandums of Undertaking (MOUs) with Cambodian pharmacies, in hopes of acquiring our medications for the screening at a discounted price. This will ensure better utilisation of our finances, as well as better support for local pharmacies in Poipet.

As each village has a unique demographic along with its respective set of healthcare challenges, the Logistics team here in project Battambang always remains adaptable and is constantly ready to revamp whatever necessary to provide for the people of Cambodia to the best of our ability. By working closely with our Cambodian counterparts, we aim to deepen our understanding in the new villages that we will be seeing in 2024.





EDUCATION

Our Education Committee is responsible for empowering our scholars through education, in order to engender greater social change within the community and advocate for self-sufficiency within the local community. The committee also works with various schools in Poipet in efforts to provide support to their school systems, supplementing and improving the lessons received by the children.

OVERVIEW

In this December trip, we carried out 3 different programmes to aid in the education of the locals. This year, we implemented the **School Support Programme (SSP)** as per our hopes from last year's trip. In SSP, we supplemented what was taught in schools by preparing first-aid booklets and teaching them basic skills including hand hygiene. We also pasted posters around the school on important topics as decided from the previous screenings. This year's LADS Camp focused on the themes of **Adaptability and Professionalism**, and was a 1-day camp where we imparted useful knowledge to the LADS Scholars. It was also a great opportunity to foster bonding between the scholars. Finally, we had an Education booth during screening, where we covered chronic and acute conditions that were taught by LADS scholars with the help of posters we prepared beforehand.



LIGHT-A-DREAM

Our goal with Light-A-Dream Scholarship (LADS) Camp each year is to **foster connections with and between LADS scholars**, both past scholars and new students. We use this opportunity to teach them valuable skills that will empower them in the future, and use a variety of interactive games to allow them to practise their communication and teamwork skills. This year's LADS camp was a 1-day camp, where we focused on the themes of **Adaptability and Professionalism**. Under these themes, we also covered stress and time management, handling situations professionally, and conflict resolution. Content for each theme was taught to the LADS scholars first. There were then games and activities like role play and group presentations for the students to use the new skills learnt. There was also a sharing by one of the first-generation LADS scholars in aims of inspiring and motivating them.

LADS CAMP

We were glad to see that LADS camp this year was met with a great deal of enthusiasm and active participation. Placing the scholars in groups allowed for them to interact with others who they might not have been familiar with, and allowed for them to expand their social circle. The scholars were also very attentive to the content being taught to them, and many of them took notes throughout the presentation. This was especially prominent during the sharing by the past LADS scholar, during which he shared his personal education and employment journey, and how the LADS scholarship impacted him.

The LADS Scholars that came were mainly in their pre-university and university years, most of them only fluent in Khmer and not so much in English. The activities planned were appropriate for their age group, but most of the interaction they had were with the Camby Comm and amongst themselves, due to the language barrier the SG comm faced. We received good feedback regarding this year's theme and activities and are once again immensely grateful for the enthusiastic bunch of LADS Scholars who joined us for the camp. We also gave out sponsored backpacks, pencil cases and stationary items which were met with great excitement!

Compared to last year, we felt that this year's theme was more relevant and useful for them especially once they start working and we hope that the camp has equipped them with the skills and knowledge to be able to better carry themselves and have more self-confidence even in uncomfortable situations.

In future, we plan to organise LADS camp over a longer duration of time, involving bonding with not just other LADS scholars, but also with the SG and Camby Comm. More activities that do not require much use of language can also be planned to facilitate bonding with the SG comm.

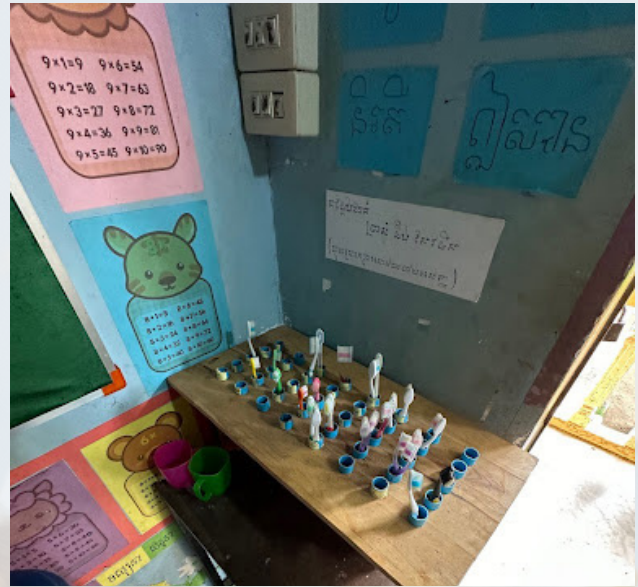


SSP

The purpose of the School Support Programme (SSP) is to supplement the education provided for the children at Love Without Borders (LWB) schools, to ensure the lessons equip students with relevant knowledge. The topics include certain **health conditions or issues** which the children commonly face in Poipet.

We prepared our very own **first-aid booklets** which included topics such as wound dressing, animal bites, dental issues, burns and basic first-aid skills. Alongside these booklets that were printed and given out to the classes, we also demonstrated certain skills such as bandaging with a crepe bandage, the 7-steps of hand hygiene as well as techniques to remove insect stings.

The provision of the first-aid booklets which the teachers are to keep in class would allow for easy access to the information and techniques needed should the children accidentally injure themselves or if their friends were to suffer from any of the incidents we included such as heat stroke, sprains, bites, etc. This creates an environment where they are more educated and clear about what to do in such situations, allowing for optimal recovery and lower chances of infections and complications. More can be done to **train the teachers** on key health areas they should focus on, potentially also sharing with them Singapore school's approach to tackling these health problems.



SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

At the same time, we also pasted posters surrounding 4 topics of importance (based on past health screenings):

1

Dental Care:

Proper toothbrushing habits and foods to avoid/consume to promote dental care

2

Healthy diet:

Based on Singapore's healthy plate initiative

3

Animal bite treatment:

How to avoid being bitten and steps to take after encountering an animal bite

4

Hair lice:

How to detect and how to treat

These posters helped to supplement their existing health education. In their classrooms, we noticed there were posters that taught the children about animal bites, healthy diet and proper dental care. There were also toothbrushes, a sign that dental care is a topic that is already focused on. In future years, we can focus on topics that are not as emphasised by the school itself, as well as print the posters on more lasting mediums so they can be retained in their school longer.



SUSTAINABILITY/ FUTURE DIRECTION

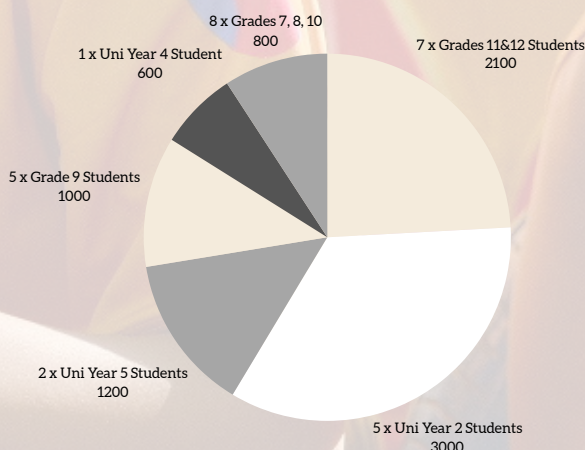
For our upcoming trips, we will be aiming to **supplement their curriculum** and help to improve the programmes they already have in place. We aim to let the Cambodian committee have a more active role in planning and syllabus for LADS camp alongside SG committee, as well as expanding LADS camp to 2-3 days + involving the entire committee. We would also like to reach out to teachers for teacher training for a **more sustainable and long-lasting impact**, and thus supplement their existing curriculum.

Some other plans include:

- The possibility of touching on **mental health topics**
- We may want to reconfirm the selection criteria of the LADS Scholars with Sister Gomi (Our Cambodian contact)
- We aim to connect with the LADS Scholars & their families even better through house visits

OUR SCHOLARS:

Sun Theary	Chheang Kimsoum	Thit Pheng	Kong Chantrea	Kheom Theareak
Thet Srey Pov	Meas Srey Mey	Lim Vuthy	Porn Srey Khouch	Sey Sonia
Thit Pow	Leng Sovandara	Lim Vutha	Douen Mesa	Khan Srey Neang
Sok Theary	Theang Lisha	Pich Srey Nich	Vann Vannak	Sompat
Longdy	Thet Raden	Kunthia	Thit Sing	Thet Rady
Vann Peakday	Sok An	Nat Vesna		



SCHOLAR COUNT:

28

We managed to sponsor the education of 28 Cambodian students in financial need

TOTAL EXPENDITURE AS OF DEC 2023

\$\$\$11750

~US\$8700



DEVELOPMENT

Our Development Committee oversees the collection and analysis of data regarding the individuals we serve, utilizing this information to strategically guide the direction of our project. Additionally, we are responsible for coming up with and bringing to life new and inventive ideas to further the project's goals.

OVERVIEW

In our main trip in December 2023, Project Battambang revisited **Dong Arah Village, Mother of Peace Kindergarden and Phum Prachea Thoam Lech**. As a Development Committee, we made notable progress through our comprehensive door-to-door surveys and initiated several impactful projects, including the introduction of the Battambus service and the formation of roving teams.



DOOR TO DOOR SURVEYS

Our door-to-door surveys this year covered **28 households in Dong Aranh and 68 households in Phum Prachea Thoam Lech**. Building upon last year's methodology, which utilised traditional pen and paper, we embraced technological advancements to streamline data collection and processing. By incorporating Google Sheets and employing standardised dropdown options, we significantly reduced the time required for data handling. This optimization not only improved efficiency but also allowed for more time for meaningful interactions with the villagers, which we felt was important in order to build rapport with them.

In addition to gathering crucial data, our teams distributed **oral rehydration salts and educational materials on prevalent conditions such as hypertension**. The conditions we chose to focus on were chosen based on our health surveys last year specific to each village. This approach not only facilitated health education but being on the ground with the villagers also deepened our understanding of the communities' health determinants and post-COVID recovery status. Engaging directly with the villagers gave us insights into their lives and challenges, fostering a closer connection between our team and the community. However, we realised during the surveying process that many of the villagers could not read or write. This raised concerns over the effectiveness of the posters (which were majority words based) in educating villagers on common healthcare issues. In the future, the posters could be improved to be **more image based, to reduce confusion and minimise barriers to healthcare education**.



Our work also extended beyond surveys as we further solidified our relationships with the Village Chiefs, ensuring a collaborative and respectful partnership. This ongoing dialogue is vital for the sustainable growth of our initiatives and reflects our commitment to the well-being and development of these communities. We hope to continue deepening our relationships with the people in the village in the upcoming visits too!

EXIT PLAN

The transition of Project Battambang's involvement in Dong Arahn represents a significant milestone in our journey since our initial engagement in 2019. Our recent visit, marked by **comprehensive health screenings and in-depth door-to-door surveys**, provided a tangible measure of the progress within the community. Throughout our time in Dong Arahn, the improvements in the villagers' living conditions and their increased access to healthcare services were unmistakable. The enhanced structural integrity of homes and the community's broader healthcare accessibility underscored a **considerable advancement in the quality of life**.

These observations, coupled with the positive health outcomes evident from our screening data, signified a pivotal moment for our project team. The majority of individuals assessed during our screenings exhibited signs of good health, affirming the effectiveness of our interventions and the community's resilience. Moreover, many of the villagers had also exhibited good knowledge on where to access healthcare services which really touched us. This confluence of factors led us to the conclusion that the time has come for a strategic transition of our role in Dong Arahn, entrusting the continuation of progress to our capable Cambodian partners.





EXIT PLAN

In alignment with this decision, our project has initiated the planning process for a thoughtful and structured exit from Dong Arahn. This approach does not signify an abandonment of the village; instead, it represents a **shift towards a sustainable model of empowerment**. Our strategy focuses on transferring responsibilities to local counterparts, ensuring they have the support and resources necessary to maintain and build upon the achievements realised thus far. This transition is designed to **fortify the community's self-sufficiency while maintaining a supportive stance**, ready to provide additional assistance as needed to ensure the enduring success of Dong Arahn.

This deliberate and respectful handover strategy exemplifies our commitment to sustainable development and the empowerment of the communities we serve. It reflects a **belief in the strength and capacity of our Cambodian colleagues and the resilience of the Dong Arahn community**, marking a new chapter in our collective journey towards health and well-being. With this being our first pull-out since the Covid-19 pandemic, we are heartened to see the villagers healthier and more health-informed from when we first met them in 2019. Moving forward, we are hoping to visit new villagers where access to healthcare is minimal and where our screening can touch even more lives.

BATTAMBUS X ROVING TEAM



In the past year, Project Battambang embarked on an innovative venture with the introduction of the Battambus initiative. This initiative was conceptualised as a **fully mobile screening unit**, encapsulating all necessary logistics and medical equipment within a single, agile bus framework. This approach aimed to explore the feasibility of conducting our health screenings in a completely mobile format, questioning the logistical and operational viability of such an endeavour. We are delighted to report that, through rigorous planning and execution, the Battambus was deployed successfully in Dong Arah Village, demonstrating our ability to adapt and operate efficiently in dynamic environments.

Furthermore, recognizing the need to reach those who are physically unable to attend our central screening locations, we implemented **decentralised screenings** as a complementary strategy. This involved deploying mobile teams, including medical professionals, to identify and provide care to immobile patients directly within their homes. Preliminary efforts included reconnaissance teams entering communities to identify individuals in dire need of medical attention yet unable to participate in our centralised screenings. Subsequently, our medical teams provided house-to-house visits, offering much-needed healthcare services. Despite the logistical challenges, the initiative proved to be exceptionally rewarding, allowing us to offer medical consultations to patients who had been without medical care for years, many of whom were suffering from long-term, chronic conditions.

The pilot phase of the Battambus initiative, while groundbreaking, was not without its challenges. For instance, the necessity of multiple trips back to the central screening location for specific medications highlighted the need for **improved logistical planning**. Packing and organising the bus with various medical supplies and equipment, including foldable gazebos and tables for makeshift workstations, presented significant logistical hurdles.



Drawing from these experiences, we have identified several areas for improvement and learning. These insights will be invaluable as we aim to refine and expand the Battambus initiative. Our objective remains to extend our reach to more remote and previously unvisited villages, thereby widening our impact and furthering our mission to provide accessible healthcare services to rural communities. The Battambus project stands as a testament to our commitment to innovation, adaptability, and the relentless pursuit of health equity.

COMMUNAL LIBRARY

This trip, we launched the **Communal Library initiative** with the primary objective of **enhancing access to English literature** for the students at Love Without Boundaries (LWB) school. This initiative saw the aggregation of a considerable volume of books from the National University of Singapore (NUS) community, subsequently contributing to the library at LWB. While we acknowledge the success achieved thus far, it has come to our attention that the initiative could have been even more impactful had we initiated the donation process earlier.

Furthermore, a comprehensive assessment revealed that LWB already possesses a substantial collection of books. As we move forward, our strategic focus will include proactively engaging with school communities and non-governmental organisations in Singapore at an earlier stage, establishing clear donation goals to quantify our impact. Additionally, we aim to foster a closer collaboration with the principal of LWB, Mr Lheng, exploring avenues to gauge the extent of the students' engagement with the donated books and devising ways to seamlessly integrate them into their educational English curriculum and expand this initiative into Mother of Peace Kindergarten. This strategic approach is anticipated to enhance the effectiveness and reach of our Communal Library initiative, aligning it more closely with our overarching mission of promoting literacy and education.



OUR FIRST MENTOR

This year marks a significant milestone for Project Battambang as we are honoured to welcome our inaugural Development Head mentor, Mr. Jo, a distinguished engineer with Rolls Royce. Mr. Jo's profound expertise in data processing is anticipated to bring transformative insights and advancements to our operations.

His integration into our project underscores our commitment to embracing cutting-edge methodologies and technologies to enhance our data analysis capabilities. With Mr. Jo's guidance, we expect to refine our data collection and processing strategies, enabling us to make more informed decisions, optimise our interventions, and measure our impact more effectively. This collaboration is not just a testament to our project's growth and the calibre of professionals it attracts but also a pivotal step towards achieving operational excellence.

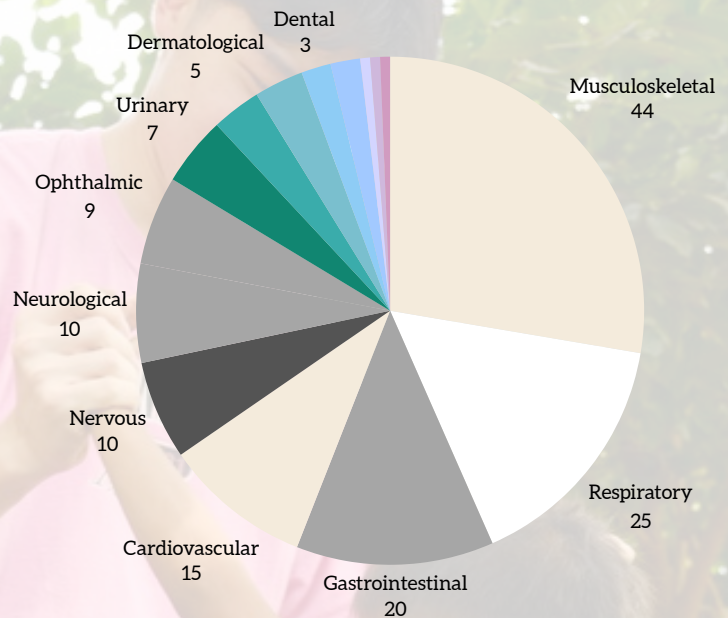


As we venture into a more multi-disciplinary approach to data-analysis, we are honoured to have Mr Jo on board with us. His genuine, kind-hearted and approachable nature has not only empowered us to explore novel, innovative ways in analysing our surveys, but has also inspired us to treat the villagers with sincerity and care. We were incredibly touched to see Mr Jo care for the villagers in a non-medical way, ensuring they were out of the scorching sunlight while waiting and helping patients move from place to place safely. It has been our honour to have Mr Jo on board with us and we are sure he has a lot more to offer in the coming years.



FUTURE PLANS

This year's expedition has been a profound learning experience for Project Battambang, bringing to light several critical insights. Foremost among these is the recognition of the need to transition towards more sustainable healthcare delivery models. While our screenings have been instrumental in gathering epidemiological data, we have come to understand that such efforts, in isolation, do not fully address the long-term health needs of the communities we serve. This realisation has underscored the limitations of providing immediate, albeit temporary, solutions—akin to "giving fish instead of teaching to fish."



REFLECTIONS

Our reflections reveal that many of the health conditions encountered are chronic in nature, necessitating continuous care and management rather than one-off interventions. Additionally, we have identified a significant demand for surgical procedures and dental care. Despite possessing the requisite expertise within our team, **the absence of adequate facilities has been a considerable barrier to providing this level of care.**

This introspection has sparked a shift in our approach, steering us towards the development of initiatives that not only address immediate health concerns but also empower communities with the knowledge and resources to sustain their health outcomes over the long term. Our goal is to evolve beyond the confines of episodic care, fostering a healthcare ecosystem that supports continuous well-being and self-sufficiency in their own country. We hope to empower the local communities, allowing them to spearhead future solutions to the challenges faced as we recognise that our Cambodian counterparts would have a better understanding of the local culture and challenges that we may be unfamiliar with. This strategic pivot reflects our commitment to not just meet immediate health needs but to lay the foundation for enduring health improvements, marking a significant evolution in our mission to serve.

FUTURE PLANS

In future, in setting the direction of the project, we hope to turn towards focusing on **training healthcare professionals**, drawing inspiration from Bong Bondol, who has been highly involved in the development of the project and execution of our initiatives. We hope to foster deeper relationships with our colleagues in Cambodia, such as the Sisters at Mother of Peace Kindergartens, and get in touch with more of our LADS scholars so that we can ensure a strong network of professionals in Cambodia. This way, we will be able to touch base more easily with the local villages there, especially in those villages that we have pulled out. While it is quite a big shift in our direction, we believe that this is necessary for us to ultimately be able to pull out of the region and successfully hand over the project to our Cambodian counterparts.





PUBLICITY

The Sponsorship Committee is responsible for the publicity, management of funds, fundraising efforts of Project Battambang as well as volunteer welfare. Much of our work is done behind the scenes to support the other committees and to carry out different roles to assure that our project has the funds and manpower to run smoothly.

PUBLICITY

Our publicity and outreach efforts mainly target social media as an **outreach platform to increase awareness of our project both in Cambodia as well as in Singapore.** Through frequent updates on our website, Singapore and Cambodian Wing Instagram accounts, the public is able to keep up-to-date with our project's efforts and more. As part of our means of outreach, the sponsorship committee works behind the camera to capture and document precious memories throughout our trip. In this aspect, we not only aim to inspire others with a similar cause, but we also strive to be transparent with the work we do as well. Our sponsorship committee is also the team behind the annual Post-Trip Reports that concisely summarise the data and statistics we collate from our trip, in addition to the work done during the trip itself. In this way, we can provide **complete accountability and transparency** to the public and friends who have been generously supporting our cause.



FUNDRAISING

Another vital aspect of the sponsorship committee is the management and raising of our project funds. Leading up to the trip, we brainstorm and carry out fundraising plans in order to raise sufficient funds for our screening and educational efforts. In 2023, we collaborated with various external vendors to sell sourdough cookies, acai, and organised a photobooth for freshmen to capture their memories during the Freshmen Orientation Programmes. Every year, we also reach out to potential donors and sponsors, who are instrumental in enabling us to continue to give back to the people of Poipet. While planning for our trips, we stringently **budget our expenditures** to ensure the essential logistics are procured, while saving the bulk of our funds for the execution of our plans on the trip itself. During the trip, we manage the project's expenditure and liaise with the Cambodian Committee to manage our LADS funds under our scholarship scheme.

WELFARE

Our Cambodian wing is an indispensable part of our committee. Every year, we show our appreciation for them, and our doctors, through organising our Welfare Night. In 2023, after eight consecutive days of health screenings and health education programmes, we had our Welfare Night to celebrate the camaraderie and bonds forged along the way. The evening was chock-full with scrumptious food and exciting programmes, made memorable as the basement of the church was filled with hearty laughter and smiles. Stronger ties were established with the Cambodian volunteers, as we exchanged contact information to keep in touch with one another despite geographical constraints.

We look forward to their return for our upcoming May 2024 trip for our health screening plans.



THE BATTAMBANG EXPERIENCE - 2023 PROJECT DIRECTORS -

If someone had asked me “Why did you join Project Battambang?” back in M1, I would not have been able to answer confidently, even more so imagine myself to take charge of leading this team.

Having gone for the first outbound trip post-COVID, our (M2) batch had done a thorough after-action review (AAR) of what was done well, and what could be done better. All of us shared a common goal of bringing this project to even greater heights and the 6-8 months of planning for this December trip was filled with various ups and downs.

Yet, as we arrived at the familiar Mother of Peace Kindergarten (MOPK) after a year, we were once again warmly welcomed by Bong Bondol and the Sisters, whom we have worked closely with. It was deeply heartwarming to witness our plans finally come to fruition, especially with greater outreach to even more villagers as compared to the previous trip.

In terms of health screening, we were able to re-establish our partnership with Poipet Referral Hospital (PRH). This allowed our team to conduct follow-up care for our screened villagers in terms of referrals for dental care and TB etc. Moreover, we were also able to successfully spearhead new initiatives such as the ‘Mobile Screening’ at Dong Aranh Village, as well as our first-ever health screening at our long-term beneficiary, ‘Love Without Boundaries’ (LWB) School.

Above all, I will never forget the little moments and precious memories shared with our beloved Camby committee members and volunteers.

Thank you Poipet and Project Battambang for reminding me to be thankful for what I have, to find peace and happiness in our daily hustles, as well as to always work hard for the betterment of others’ lives. Graduating from this project is definitely bittersweet, but I look forward to watching Project Battambang grow in the near future.

-Shaun Tan, Project Director -



Shaun Tan (left), Project Director

The Battambang experience left an indelible mark on us, creating memories that will resonate throughout our lives.

Recollections of our inaugural journey in December 2022 remain vivid, standing out as one of the most remarkable trips I've ever undertaken and made us even more ambitious and determined for our 2023 Trip.

Navigating the transition into 2023 was rife with uncertainties, as we grappled with the weightier responsibilities of orchestrating upcoming expeditions and guiding our juniors.

The task of planning and coordinating with stakeholders loomed daunting, our minds awash with uncertainties regarding the outcomes of our endeavors.

Yet, upon arriving at MOPK, our apprehensions dissolved as we reconnected with Bong Bondol and Sister Gomi.

Engaging with various villagers, conducting door-to-door interactions to comprehend their challenges, empowered us to better address their needs and assess the progress since our last visit.

Subsequent days unfolded seamlessly as we meticulously prepared for and conducted five days of health screenings at LWB School, MOPK, and Dong Aranh Village. Our traditional School Support Programme (SSP) and Light-A-Dream Scholarship (LADS) Camp were also met with great enthusiasm by the students.

In retrospect, our journey was immensely fulfilling, a testament to our privilege to plan and execute initiatives. Such achievements owe gratitude to our exceptional committee, dedicated doctors, volunteers, generous sponsors, and invaluable contacts in Poipet. As we pass the torch to our successors, we eagerly anticipate the future endeavors that lie ahead.

-Bernice Lian, Project Director -



Bernice Lian (right), Project Director

FINANCIAL REPORT



Screening - \$882.33

Purchase of materials required to conduct the screening process as well as referrals to Poipet Referral Hospital and Optometrists.



Education - \$33.85

Purchase of supplies required to conduct LADs camps as well as our School Support Program.



Medication and Logistics - \$3,270.59

Purchase of medications and medical supplies necessary to carry out screenings.



Cambodian Committee - \$2,304.10

Purchase of food and accommodation for our Cambodian volunteers.



Transportation - \$3,099.55

Transportation of personnel from the Singapore and Cambodian committee, as well as equipment and supplies.



LADs Scholar Tuition Fees - \$ 11,827.13

Scholarships for students from the Light A Dream programme.

Total Expenditure = SGD 21,417.55

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Doctors



Dr. Goh Kar Cheng (Left)
Dr. Wong Weng Hoa (Right)



Dr. Rachel Peh



Dr. Grace

Dr. Tey Min Li

Dr. Ailica



Dr. Lin Zhi Min

Dr. Joseph Ang

Dr. Anne Goei Hui Yi

Optometrists

Ms. Keli
Ms. Nate

Volunteers

Mr. Guin Jo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Nigel Emmanuel Sim
Serene Loke

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Ong Chi Juay
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Andrew Sim
Dylan Chew Yi Jie

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Meng Geckheak
Honghab Nitvicheka
Seam Somontha
Sothy Soheat
Phon Chanseyhakmeaneath
Lim Helene
Thy Chantrea
Dorn Rachana

Kim Chansodalin
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Vuthy Narika
Virak Rosa
Saman Soktheary
Chrong Vouch Jrea
Sean Theansoeng
Por Lyhour
Chan Reaksa
Sorn Pisey

Cambodian Volunteers

Cheang Yuuer
Thri Chingyeon
Chea Phalmineaka
Sarann Narith
Kong Sovanbundith
Sreng Pengkhim
Koy Savannaarith
Den Chhaiyuth

Thri Chingyeon
Tieng Daneata
Pon Sela
Phan Sopheakneath
Buth Chansanath
Chhay ChanRaksa
Prom Socheata
Choem Mouykhim

OUR PARTNERS



THE ACAI TRUCK



THE COOKIE CLUB



SUPREME DESIGN AND PRINT



LOVE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES (LWB)



MOTHER OF PEACE KINDERGARTEN (MOPK)

OUR SPONSORS



ERGOWORKS SINGAPORE

sightonomy

SIGHTONOMY



ADVAGEN PREBIOTICS

SPECIAL THANKS TO: MR BILLIE YANG

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