



Dear Sponsors, Mentors and Friends

**It's nine months ago now, since we, Chris Ramseier and Norbert Lanter, launched the STUDAID project. Time to giving you a first overview of what happened during that time, with this first newsletter.**

### How it all started – two Swiss in Phnom Penh

In spring 2017 Chris Ramseier spent his first volunteering assignment as Senior Expert for [Swisscontact](#) in Phnom Penh. Besides the project work with a local company, Chris started to help on Saturdays at „[Le Restaurant des Enfants](#)“ (LRDE), a kitchen for street children and children from underprivileged families, where daily 200 to 250 meals are served. Chris met Sreymean and Sokkhim. Both working as teenagers or young adults, to cook and look after the children guests

of LRDE. With the support of LRDE, Sokkhim and Sreymean began studying at University. However, the funds of LRDE were scarce and the funding of the rest of study was not guaranteed. The income from 6-day full-time work of \$ 120 per month was not enough for tuition, books and transport to university. Many young people in Phnom Penh in similar situations are left to their own means and have little chance to come out of poverty on their own. Chris decided to support the education of the two young women until the end of their studies, as long as they continue to work and earn for their living. Even before his return to Zurich, Chris had arranged everything necessary with LRDE and a fiduciary lawyer in Phnom Penh, so that the support for them could begin immediately.

A few months later, in November 2017, when Chris returned to Phnom Penh for a second 10-week volunteering assignment, he met Norbert Lanter, who was just starting his first assignment

for Swisscontact in Phnom Penh. During a casual conversation, Chris told him about his direct support of Sokkhim and Sreymean and about his humanitarian support for lunch in the LRDE.

#### Why supporting students?

NGOs working in the area of education in Cambodia primarily support basic education and basic vocational training. Students who go to university after high school are virtually not supported by, although they have a decisive influence on the future of the country. Those who drop out of studies due to lack of resources or overburdening, hardly get out of the poverty-loop. If they successfully complete studies, they, as future entrepreneurs or as employed professionals or executives, will influence and give back by responsibly acting towards people and society.

During his assignment in Phnom Penh, Norbert lived in a small hotel where a young woman, named Phally, worked at the reception desk and in janitor services. Her working hours were from Monday to Friday from 7 am to 9 pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 5 to 9 pm. While working at the reception desk, Phally dealt in each free minute with thick textbooks. It turned out that she is studying at the "National University of Management" and visits the university on Saturdays and Sundays from 7 to 12 o'clock. Despite her long working hours, the financial resources were not sufficient to pay for education and living.

Like Phally, many students of low-class families without means come from the provinces. They work long and hard for the bare necessities - and there's virtually no time left to deal with the study material. Many students drop out of their studies due to congestion and thus remain stuck in the poverty cycle, even though they are talented. What helps them is the certainty that the financing of the study is guaranteed. So they can concentrate on their 5-day job to earn a living and take time to learn. Most Cambodian parents do not have the financial means to support their children.

Inspired by the model of the direct help for students, which Chris already did for Sokkhim and Sreymean, Norbert decided to support Phally in the same way, until the end of her studies. The sponsorship agreement was set up by the same lawyer Chris already co-operated with. This was, so to speak, the birth of STUDAID.

## STUDAID - a joint mission

If the model of direct sponsorship for three young female students in Phnom Penh offers them a hopeful perspective on a life without poverty, why shouldn't we do that for a larger number of young adults? - With this question in heart and mind Norbert and Chris met again on 3 January 2018 in Switzerland. In the meantime, Norbert had already put down initial ideas and plans, for setting up a small development project with this content, on paper. It quickly became clear: we have a joint mission! We gave it the name STUDAID - direct support to students from underprivileged background in Cambodia. There was also agreement on other important points, for example that in a godfather/-mother principle we are looking for sponsors who directly mentor a student. On one hand with money, on the other hand also by participation in the life of the young people in Phnom Penh. It was also important to us from the beginning that our development project remains manageable and that the administrative work does not stop us from keeping our main focus on the core of our mission at all times.

## The first dozen - four milestones

In the last nine months, we have achieved several important milestones. Here some of the highlights:

- **PGH:** Since the beginning we knew that we did not want to start an own (yet another) organization, if there are good alternatives. In **February 2018**, cooperation talks were held with Sabine Nowak, founder of the Swiss association [People for Global Humanity](#), which has been supporting young people in Cambodia for many years (orphanage with education, payment of school fees, etc.). Sabine offered us to run STUDAID as an independent program under the PGH association umbrella. There were many reasons for this solution: cooperation with the same local program coordinator in Phnom Penh, possibility of tax-exempt donations for our sponsors in Switzerland, streamlined administration and last not least the easy and yet professional co-operation with Sabine.
- **Homepage:** In order to present STUDAID to potential sponsors, our [homepage](#) was put live at the end of **March 2018**. Since then, it

has been regularly adjusted as soon as there are changes and news Sponsors and friends can get information about STUDAID at any time. Also a portrait of all STUDAID supported students can be found there.

- **Local Programm-Manager:** It is obvious that many of the coordinating and supervising activities can only be carried out on site. Therefore, we signed a cooperation agreement with NHEK Kosal in **May 2018**. He works 25% for STUDAID and 25% for the care of children and adolescents of PGH. In the remaining time Kosal is working as a private teacher for different schools. A [portrait](#) of Kosal can be found on the STUDAID homepage.
- **Twelve students:** Since January 2018, we have been able to find sponsors and mentors for a further nine students, so that we have now 12 supported students in the program at the end of **September 2018. The first dozen is full** - a significant milestone. And this pleases not only us - the joy is to be seen above all in the faces of the students, even if they are partly still quite shy, because above all the language (many of them speak only very little English) is an additional small hurdle. But thanks to the support of the sponsors and mentors, a surmountable hurdle - it's only a matter of time. Chris and Norbert were able to find out for themselves.

## The next goal - 20 students

The goal is to support up to 20 students at the same time. This means that as soon as the first students complete their studies (2019), new students can join the STUDAID program. Over the next ten or so years, we will be able to help up to 50 students with sponsorship and mentoring through their studies. currently, there are still eight "spaces" vacant, which we want to fill as soon as possible, by the end of 2019 at latest.

During his travels to Phnom Penh in February and May 2018, Norbert portrayed additional students for whom we are now seeking a sponsor / mentor. If you know potential interested parties for this task in the circle of your acquaintances, please inform us. Many Thanks!

## Information for our Sponsors / Mentors

In **January 2019** we will send out the donation cards 2018 by mail.

Already before the end of the year 2018, we will contact you with the study budget 2019 for your student. The budget will include university and English lesson tuition, books and a small contribution to the efforts of our STUDAID Program Coordinator NHEK Kosal in Phnom Penh. The data for the study budgets is collected and checked by Kosal. Kosal also checks all confirmations of the universities, including payment documents and study results (marks). We kindly ask you to make your first sponsor payment in January 2019 via our bank account. Please always state reason for payment/ name of the student in the subject line. Of course, we appreciate every extra donation, to pay local expenses of Kosal's important work or start initial sponsoring for new students in need.

At the end of **March 2019**, all sponsors will receive the **2018 STUDAID** annual report.

Thank you very much, dear STUDAID donors, for your generous sponsorship and mentoring of young people in Cambodia. You are making a big difference to twelve junior staff, who in turn - even now - will help others again.

Best regards

Chris Ramseier und Norbert Lanter

[www.studaid.org](http://www.studaid.org)

### STUDAID Bankverbindung

Vereinskonto PGH People for Global Humanity  
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IBAN: CH57 8148 7000 0402 1101 0  
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ID (BC-Nr.): 81487  
SWIFT-BIC: RAIFCH22

**Wichtig:** Bitte im Betreff immer den Namen der Studentin bzw. des Studenten angeben.