

# UNIVERSITY STUDENT REPORT

for 2009



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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

This year, we celebrate 11 students enrolled in post-secondary education in Cambodia. These students are determined and truly grateful for the opportunity to study beyond high school. They come from very poor families in rural areas. In Cambodia, half the girls and one quarter of the boys never learn to read or write. Imagine, 88% never complete high school!

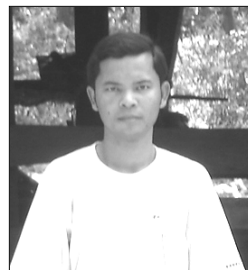
All 11 of these students graduated from high school with assistance from Friendship with Cambodia's Student Sponsorship Program. Now, with your help, we continue our commitment to these students and their communities through our University Student Fund. Our goal is to educate these young people, so that they may return to serve their communities as leaders, educators, and organizers.

In this update, we'll tell you about our program and provide photos and profiles of all the post-secondary school students. I hope you share our pride in their amazing efforts, and I ask you to please continue your generous support of our students!

Bhavia Wagner  
Executive Director

## OUR FIRST GRADUATE HELPS CAMBODIA

Prak Ri' comes from a poor family in remote Preah Vihear Province. His parents are subsistence farmers and he has five brothers and sisters. Ri' worked tirelessly helping his family and working on his studies.



With essential help from his student sponsor, Nancy Gordon of Alameda, California. Ri' was able to graduate from high school and attend a two-year teacher training program at Preah Vihear Pedagogy School. Prak Ri' is now teaching at an elementary school in Preah Vihear.

We are extremely proud of Ri's success. Cambodia has a shortage of schools and teachers, so it is very heartening to know that we helped someone become a teacher. His dream to help his family and his community came true, thanks to generous donors like you.

## OUR LAW STUDENT'S CAREER GOAL – TO REPRESENT THE POOR

Bin Srey-Deth is a first year law student sponsored by Friendship with Cambodia. The following summarizes her statement:

After completing my studies, I hope to become a good lawyer and win justice for the vulnerable people. I want to help poor villagers protest against the powerful people who seize their land. I will be an attorney who protects people who cannot afford to file a complaint when their land is stolen. In Cambodia, many people are corrupt and think only about their own profit. They take advantage of and harm the average person and those who are weak. For example, there is a case in Poipet district where powerful people used guns to seize the land of more than 80 households. Two people were killed and 4 or 5 were injured because they refused to leave their land. This is tragic.

## STARTING THE PROGRAM

One of the biggest deterrents for students who want to attend university is housing. They cannot afford it, which is why almost all of the students in university are from the city even though 85% of Cambodia's population is rural.

Our students are living in rented rooms above the offices of two of our NGO partners that have headquarters in Phnom Penh.

One dilemma for most students is choosing a major. They are from tiny villages where everyone is a subsistence farmer or fisherman. When they were in secondary school, we asked them what career they would choose and they replied 'teacher' or 'doctor,' because those were the only professions they knew.

We have introduced them to various career options. Some of the students now choose majors based on their favorite subject in school, such as math. Others want to help their community, for example, through nursing. And some are influenced by their practical parents and choose a field they know they can get work in, such as finance.

Our social workers running the program see that some students need practical work experience. So they have made arrangements for six of our sponsored students to do internships with non-profit organizations.

**The biggest challenge we face here in the US is raising \$17,000 in new funds each year for the next three years to get this program started. Please help us find donors to support these promising young people – the future of Cambodia.**

## MEET THE 2008-2009 STUDENTS RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM OUR UNIVERSITY STUDENT FUND!

The following 11 university students were asked to answer 10 questions about their year in university including: Besides studying, what did you do? How were the results of your studies this year? Do you like living in the city and what difficulties did you encounter? What do you want to do after you finish school? What do you plan to do to help your community and your society? We've summarized some of their answers below.



Chhan Samphos is a third-year student  
at the Nursing School in Stung Treng Province.

After completing this nursing course, I want to continue my studies to become a midwife because this is a skill that is needed in our developing country. In our society, where there is a lack of doctors and especially midwives, this skill can help reduce the mortality rate of mothers and infants. This is my personal and my community goal.



Hak Kim-Linh is studying Finance  
at the National Institute of Management in Phnom Penh.

This academic year, I was involved in many activities in the community such as attending workshops that raised awareness about the problems that our society faces. I helped plant trees. I gave advice to people in my community on how to take care of their health and have good hygiene. I told high school students about what it was like to live and study in the city.



Am Sina is in her first year studying Management  
at Build Bright University in Phnom Penh.

In the city, there are lots of people, so when riding my bicycle to school, my hands were shaking, I was either frightened or excited and my hands were always ready to brake, but now everything feels normal. Living here is better than at home because there is enough electricity and water, and whenever I want to study, I can. Living in the city makes me think that the genuine happiness does not mean equipping oneself with everything when others are facing hardship. We must help each other.



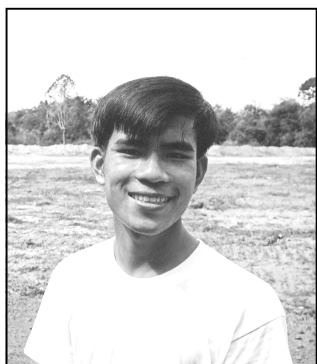
Chhuon Samphoah is a third-year Mathematics student at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

After completing my study, I have a goal to set up a “formal educational school” in the countryside in Kompong Chhnang province for the purpose of helping the poor students to receive enough additional classes (after school) to enable them to be the best students so they can get scholarships to study in university or abroad, like rich children in the city. By doing this, it gives the poor students an opportunity to have a better future, so they can break free from poverty and illiteracy.



Chum Sopha is in her second year of Teacher Training at Pedagogy School in Pursat Province.

I have new friends, as we are born not to live alone. We need relatives, friends, or neighbors in order to have good communication and friendship with each other. After completing my studies, I want to become a good teacher and help the local children to have basic knowledge, so it is easy for them to continue on to secondary school.



Ly Ritthy is a first-year student studying Architecture at Norton University in Phnom Penh.

In my first semester there were 361 Architecture students and I ranked 22 [in academic achievement]. When I have my own company, I will save part of the income to help the poor students who are unable to go to school. At this university, there are hardly any poor students, this is why I want to help the poor students and my community.



Bin Srey-Deth is in her first year studying Law at the Royal University of Law and Economics in Phnom Penh.

After completing my studies, I plan to set up short training sessions to discuss the law and the rights and duties of the people, because some people in the community don't understand the law and their rights. I will be a legal consultant to help the community as well as the whole society.



Man Malen is in her first year majoring in Banking at Build Bright University in Phnom Penh.

My goal after completing my study is to work in the field of Banking and Finance. If I have the opportunity, I would like to be a painter because I have loved to draw ever since I was young, I want to become a famous artist. This year, I feel so happy to be able to study, but sometimes I miss my home and home town.



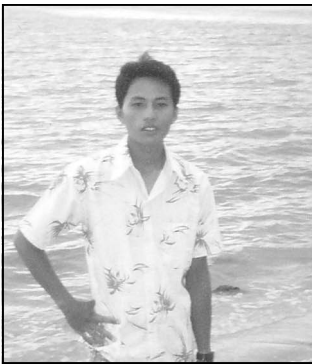
Chem Khemarat is studying Marketing at Human Resources University in Phnom Penh.

My goal is that I want to become an English Interpreter. Next year, I will study English Literature, the subject that I dreamed about when I was in secondary school. When I arrived in Phnom Penh for the first time, I thought that my English was poor and I was afraid that I could not follow, so I decided to study Marketing for a year. English is a popular language in the world.



Bin Thyda is a first year student and an Accounting major at Vanda Insitute of Accounting in Phnom Penh.

During my free time, I read documents that prepare me to work for an NGO. My goal is to become an accountant because I am good at recording my everyday expenses. When I was young, I always liked to play that I am the boss, the person who pays the salaries, or the bank owner. That is why I believe that I am suited for accounting. I read newspapers and listen to radio broadcasts about the problems in the community. I like to listen to ADHOC's program [a human rights group], *Voice of the Victims*.



Uk Chan-Doeun is majoring in Computer Technology at Build Bright University in Phnom Penh.

When I arrived in Phnom Penh for the first time, I missed home, my siblings, and especially my mother. The environment here is not clean and is full of toxins, and the food contains chemicals. I have many friends who come from provinces all over Cambodia. They are very friendly to me, they never look down on me because I am poor. I feel hopeful and happy because I have the opportunity to study in Phnom Penh.