

## A University of WA-Cambodia Partnership for Social Change

**The Problem:** For four years starting in 1969, the US government dropped more than 100,000 bombs across Cambodia—even though the countries were not officially at war—profoundly destabilizing life for ordinary Cambodians for decades to come. The atrocities that followed are unknown to many. More than one-quarter of the population died of starvation, disease, forced labor, and genocide. *Fewer than 500 people with postsecondary education survived Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.* The prolonged armed conflict still traumatizes younger generations. Estimates of PTSD range from 14% to 33% among Khmer Rouge survivors, as compared with 0.4% worldwide suffering from PTSD (McLaughlin & Wickeri, 2012).



Until recently, Cambodia had no university program to educate students to address the social, health, and governance issues of war trauma.

**A Local Solution:** The University of Washington (UW) School of Social Work partnered with the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) by investing in six Cambodian students, who obtained a Master of Social Work at UW. These six returned home to become core faculty and leaders of Cambodia's first college-level social work degree program and corresponding Department of Social Work (DSW) which opened in 2008.

Ten years later, 145 social workers professionally trained by the DSW faculty have entered the Cambodian work force, providing critical services to communities served NGOs.

Additionally, 249 local NGO staff participated in DSW continuing education courses, enhancing their case management and care coordination skills. The DSW is the only Cambodian college program to receive any form of external accreditation (May 2017 from the Philippines Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities), a tribute to the high quality of education provided by dedicated local faculty.

**The Need:** The Partnership seeks funding to grow the Cambodian scholarship program in order to ensure an ongoing pipeline of highly trained social workers who will continue to build robust, high-quality social and health services in a country torn by armed conflict.

Our goal is to raise \$91,735 by the end of 2018 to strengthen the infrastructure of support for faculty and ensure that RUPP can continue without interruption. Our goal for 2019 is to raise an additional \$85,000. Donations of any size are appreciated. *No funds raised* are used for UW administrative support.

**An Opportunity:** Supporting the DSW is a unique opportunity to train highly motivated young Cambodians with a strong mission to change their *country* for the better—for generations to come. Your support now will keep the doors open on this remarkable program.

## From program graduates:

"To me, the [school] is small but **people are making big changes** by empowering young people to pursue social justice and support human rights. I miss my classes, friends and teachers."—*BSW Graduate*



"Our job (as field learning supervisors) is to expose students to other activities, and inspire them to have passions and life goals. I went to school where teachers were not student centered, I was bullied, teachers didn't care, I wasn't engaged by them. Social work (education) changed my life. I had an opportunity to talk, to share my opinion, and begin to learn about myself, who I was deep inside. I loved asking questions. My family was poor but I still remember one day when I was 7 or 8 seeing all of these kids begging. This image stuck with me, I want to end children begging in Cambodia. We need to create change."



—*BSW Graduate*

"As an alumni, I would like to applaud the department on all that it's done in a short period. You know, whenever I go to NGO network meetings and meetings with the Ministry of Social Affairs, I always meet DSW graduates who are there as representatives of different service providers. They share ideas and jump in to contribute to decision making. The DSW has produced great human resources for Cambodian in the field of social work, and graduates make an impact on vulnerable groups. While we started as a small group of graduates in 2012, we (alumni) are growing bigger. We keep moving forward, keep growing from year to year, and I believe we are the top institution to produce qualified social workers for Cambodia. I am really proud."

—*BSW Graduate*

## To support this vital partnership please contact:

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Online gifts may be made at <http://tiny.cc/jovp1y>.

\*\* All funds raised by the Partnership are administered through the UW Foundation, which is a federally recognized 501-C3 and are accounted for by the UW fiscal system. 100% of the funds raised contribute to Partnership activities and none go to administrative overhead.