

## ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Dear Readers

STUDAID was brought to life in January 2018 by us, Chris Ramseier and Norbert Lanter. Here we take a look back at STUDAID's exceedingly successful first year. In our first newsletter (Newsletter Nr. 1, October 2018) we describe in detail how STUDAID came about. All newsletters as well as current news can be found on our homepage at [www.studaid.org](http://www.studaid.org).

The Switzerland-based **non-profit organization People for Global Humanity** ([www.pgh-charity.org](http://www.pgh-charity.org)), led by Sabine Nowak, has given STUDAID the opportunity to be run as an independent program within PGH. Since PGH has been engaged in the care and education of young people in Cambodia for years, which means there are synergies at multiple levels.

The STUDAID's **goal** is to support underprivileged students in Cambodia in finishing their studies at university successfully.

Due to its sorrowful history Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. One in

five people has to make ends meet with only one dollar per day. Chinese investors are bringing - not entirely selflessly - a lot of money into the country; only few see these profits. The gap between the few extremely wealthy and those who have nothing increases steadily. This is particularly noticeable in the capital of Phnom Penh, home to 2 million people. Next to the Bentley-Dealership, lives a homeless family with their toddlers; they are so-called „Scavengers“ and live from collection garbage. The largest part of the 18 million citizens lives in the countryside from agriculture. Naturally, people are drawn to the capital. Young high-school students, who must move from the countryside to the city in order to study at university are particularly exposed to danger.

The **sponsors** of the STUDAID students come from our business and private connections and live in Switzerland, Austria and New Zealand. They provide the educational costs of their student(s). These include: University tuition, English lessons as well as school supplies. Depending on the university and the year of study, this amounts



to approximately USD 1'000-1'200. Sponsors are, where possible, also mentors to their students, which means regular exchanges with students via e-mail, chat and video calls.

Each sponsored **student** works full-time to earn their own lodging, food, clothing as well as moped. There are no public means of transportation in Phnom Penh, which means each student needs to be able to commute between work, home and university on their own moped.

Because we care more about depth than breadth, we decided at the very beginning to initially take on no more than **max. 20 students** as part of the STUDAID program. It is important to us to be able to know each student and be able to follow their progress. We also seek to prevent administrative tasks from keeping us from the core of our mission. The ability to accompany the students on their path as well as possible is a core requirement to us. **As of the end of 2018, 15 students have joined the STUDAID program.** We expect all 20 spots to have been filled in the first half of 2019.

## Important Milestones in 2018

- The first four students not sponsored by Chris and Norbert personally join the STUDAID program in **March**. At the end of March, the program already supports 7 students.
- In **April** the STUDAID homepage goes live.
- In **May** the local studied program manager in Phnom Penh, Mr. NHEK Kosal is nominated. He is a teacher by trade, and was already involved with PGH on a part-time basis.
- Norbert spends a week each in Phnom Penh during **February** and **May**, Chris is in Phnom Penh for four weeks in **July / August**.
- In **May** and **July** the first STUDAID seminars for students take place. At the July seminar, there's already ten students participating.
- In **August**, we make an exception to our rule to only sponsor university students. Two young, talented people, who need support to finish high school are added to the program. Sreymey and Sreykeo are our „special cases“. They don't count towards our overall maximum of 20 students. Thus, we technically have 22 slots in the program.
- In **October** we send out the first newsletter.
- In **December** we receive a donation of CHF 5'000 to financially secure the STUDAID program itself from a sponsor who wishes to remain anonymous. Thus, we have a fallback available with which we can finance difficult or emergency situations of our students.



## Particular Highlights

We are happy to be able to **highlight** how seamlessly NHEK Kosal has transitioned into his role in Phnom Penh. He looks after the students as intensively as possible. Additionally, he pre-screens new potential students. We were also particularly happy about how spontaneously people approached for sponsorship agreed to be support a student. Lastly - and this is very dear to us - we are extremely happy about the commitment and engagement „our students“ have shown for their work and their studies. There have been no dropouts. Everyone sends their report cards for exams passed and receipts for tuition paid. The students handle their privilege with the highest respect. They also try wherever possible to pass on some of what they are enabled to do through their sponsorship to help younger students, colleagues or their families. We are touched to see them share and support others out of their own initiative.

## Challenges

Which are the **greatest challenges**? There are two. Our first challenge is, that the establishment of transparent and efficient processes incl. professional bookkeeping leaves something to be desired in this cross-cultural environment. The reliability and predictability of our actions are

handled according to Swiss standards. This is our commitment to our sponsors. Additionally, we guarantee that the donations arrive with their students 1:1. You do not pay towards administrative costs in Switzerland. Everything that is done from Switzerland in terms of time and money, is done by volunteers. Chris and Norbert’s travel and lodging expenses for our work in Cambodia, is also financed by each of us (Chris and Norbert) personally.

Our second challenge is the way in which our sponsors can be in touch with their students. Alongside the difficulty of communication with a very limited English vocabulary on our students part, they are also very shy towards foreigners. Particularly when they are older and have grey hair. Older people are a subject of the utmost respect in Cambodia. It has proven valuable to have NHEK Kosal join a video call from time to time, to allow for translation to Khmer - the language of Cambodia. We encourage our sponsors to reach out to NHEK Kosal to co-ordinate video calls. It has also proven worthy to exchange a few words via chat and to occasionally send a picture or two back and forth.

We begin our second year with great optimism. For 2019 we plan to reach 22 students supported in total. Additionally, the first students will finish their bachelor in autumn of 2018.



We are holding discussions with them to help them clarify what they will be doing once they've graduated. If they are interested in pursuing a Master's Degree, we will discuss the possibility with their sponsors. A few of them are planning to study Chinese. University graduates who communicate in Chinese can expect to receive a monthly salary of USD 400 instead of USD 300.

After the graduation of our first students, we'll need to think about how to remain in contact with them for their first few years after their STUDAID sponsorship. This is absolutely key in order for us to understand the sustainability of our work. Additionally, we are planning to hold an „exchange of experiences“ with our sponsors in the second half of the year.

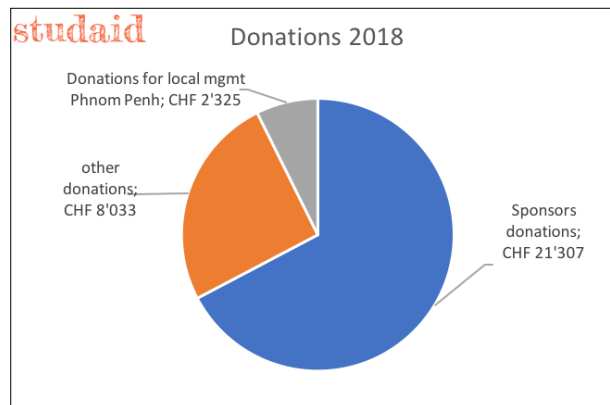


*„Through the experience of my work for the first year, I am very happy and satisfied to work for facilitating tasks for STUDAID which focuses on helping the underprivileged students in Cambodia. And I have learned many things related in the program from both students here, different sponsors and team work.*

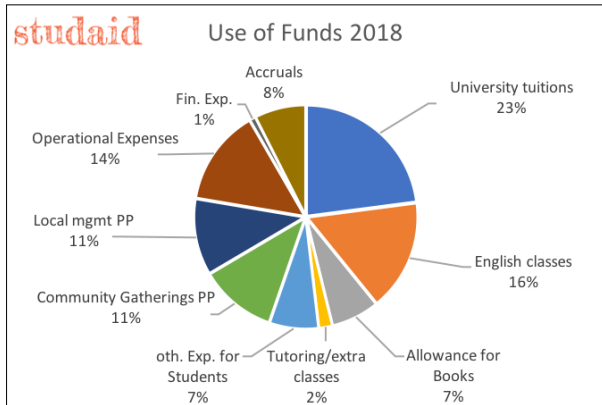
*In addition, I know how to make documents precisely by getting advice and many suggestions to make things from my great team work, Norbert, Chris and Juliane and how to work with students from different backgrounds of knowledge and living situations.“*

## Financial Situation

Besides the direct donations from sponsors to „their“ students, we've also received donations for the work of our program manager in Phnom Penh, as well as for the expansion of STUDAID. The distribution of funds per use category is as follows:



The costs for the expansion of the organization and communication in Switzerland, as well as in Cambodia was relatively high in comparison to the cost of education. However, these costs were largely covered by Norbert and Chris and all tasks in Switzerland were completed free of charge.



The category „other Expenses for students“ includes transactions which exceed the allowance, such as computer and study excursions. Thanks to the donation not specifically earmarked for a particular student, we were able to provision for hardships.

From the bottom of our hearts we thank: All our sponsors for their generous engagement and their trust in our work which we were allowed to experience in our first year. Sabine Nowak for the uncomplicated collaboration; without her we would not have gotten off the ground so quickly; our „man in Phnom Penh“, NHEK Kosal, who is able to handle our Swiss conscientiousness well; our good ghost in the background, Juliane Lanter. She gave us much of her time for the development and care of our homepage as well as the fine-tuning of the administration; and the many smaller or bigger volunteers, whether they donated time or money. All of you have made a significant contribution to the success of our first year.



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Christoph Ramseier und Norbert Lanter

**STUDAID Account Information**

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 Raiffeisenbank, Limmatquai 68, CH-8001 Zurich  
 ID (BC-Nr.): 81487  
 SWIFT-BIC: RAIFCH22

**Important:** Please include a subject with each payment, e.g. the name of the student.