



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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International Volunteer Day: saying thanks to volunteers supporting development in Cambodia

The connection and friendships between Australian volunteers and their Cambodian counterparts will be recognised and celebrated tomorrow on International Volunteer Day (5 December). International Volunteer Day was established by the UN in 1985 to recognise the valuable contribution volunteers make to international development across the world.

H.E Pablo Kang, Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, said that recognising the value of skilled international volunteering has never been more important than in 2020. ‘The impact of COVID-19 on communities in Cambodia has been profound, and while it has been a challenging year for Australian volunteers and the organisations they support, volunteering always finds a way,’ he said.

Since 1984 skilled Australian volunteers have supported development in Cambodia, joining hundreds of local partner organisations to help them achieve their own development goals through the Australian Volunteers Program, which is supported by the Australian Government.

Australian volunteers returned to Australia early in the year due to the impact of COVID-19, however the Australian Volunteers Program has continued supporting partner organisations in Cambodia throughout 2020. Nine volunteers supported their partner organisation online from home in Australia through the program’s new Remote Volunteering initiative.

The Cambodian Organization for Children and Development, which works with families and communities to improve the lives of children, continued to be supported by their volunteer remotely after he had returned to Australia, through providing advice and assistance online, helping the team with funding applications; evaluating programs that sourced alternative incomes for families; and promoting COVID-19 safe practices, like mask-wearing and hand-washing.

The Women’s Media Center of Cambodia, another of our partner organisations in Cambodia, was supported with a grant through the Australian Volunteer Program’s Impact Fund to help them and their community respond to the impacts of COVID-19. The grant funded the Center’s *COVID-19 and Cambodia* media campaign, which provided reliable information about COVID-19, enabling them to take steps to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from the pandemic.

‘We are extremely grateful for the way Australian volunteers, and the local organisations they work with, have continued to support each other,’ Ambassador Kang said. ‘Today we say thanks to volunteers for all they have contributed to development in Cambodia, and for the long-lasting relationships they form with the Cambodian community.’

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