

Kampot Traditional Music School



**For Orphaned
and Disabled Children**

**KHMER CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
(K C D I)**

THE HISTORY OF CAMBODIA

Cambodia as late as the fifteenth century dominated a great part of South East Asia. Now much depleted it none the less has an extraordinary rich and diverse culture. The main religion of Cambodia today is Theravada Buddhism, having converted from Brahmanism around the fourteenth century BCE. There are also the animist minorities of the Khmer Leu in Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces. There are the Cham people who practice Islam and who originally had their own kingdom, the Kingdom of the Champa, which ended around the sixteenth century when Vietnam began domination of the region. Today Cambodia also includes many Chinese who are mostly merchants, and Vietnamese born in Cambodia, who are often the fishermen of the Mekong.

Cambodia, famous for the great temples of Angkor in the Western province of Siem Reap, continued friction and war with Thailand until the nineteenth century. Ruled by the monarchy the country was influenced by French colonization from 1863 until Cambodian Independence in 1953. Until the latter part of the twentieth century, the Khmer people knew relative stability. This was shattered in 1970, when Lon Nol overthrew Prince Norodom Sihanouk, exiling the monarch and ruling Cambodia in an unsteady regime for five years. Cambodia's political instability was increased by the US-Vietnam war, which resulted in the bombing of Cambodia by US forces, in pursuit of Vietnamese Viet Cong. Consequently one million refugees from the countryside flooded into the small capital *Phnom Penh*. During this period, the guerrilla movement of the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot, with its Maoist ideals, grew stronger in the countryside.

In 1975, after a series of victorious battles outside the capital, the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh and began what is one of history's most brutal regimes. This resulted in the genocide of the Cambodian people, where a third of the population were killed or starved to death. Cities and towns emptied, herded into the countryside, the Cambodian people were forced to form an agrarian society, known as the Year Zero. Intellectuals, teachers, doctors, civil servants, artists, engineers, factory workers, were targeted, tortured and murdered. Without hospitals, medical care, currency, electricity or clean water, by the time the Khmer Rouge regime was beaten by the Vietnamese in 1978, the Cambodian people faced starvation and a total collapse of their country.

The Cambodian people then endured over ten years of Vietnamese rule, where Cambodia's traditional culture was actively discouraged. After UN sponsored free elections, Cambodia enjoyed relative stability, (despite Khmer Rouge guerrilla warfare in certain areas,) until 1997, when the former Vietnamese-backed government regained power in a bloody coup. The Cambodian people are still trying to recover their lost heritage. Nothing can compensate for the loss of so many during the regime of the Khmer Rouge. Struggling for survival and to find a balance, Cambodia's people face a vacuum of knowledge and skill. Compounded by the aftermath of civil war, mines and unstable political leadership, the country has much to overcome before peace and growth can be restored to her people. Yet the Cambodian people are an example to all of us, for their courage, dignity and beautiful culture, in the face of so much difficulty and suffering.

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Cambodian Registered Charity Number 1473

Background: The Kampot Traditional Music School for Orphaned and Disabled Children (Khmer Cultural Development Institute) was legalized as a non-governmental humanitarian organization in 1993 and constructed in 1994. Situated about 140 km southwest of the capital Phnom Penh, Kampot Province suffers from drought in the dry season and flooding in the Monsoon season.



Cambodia - Kampot Province - Kampot City

The rural population live without electricity and drinking water and the percentage of Malaria, Tuberculosis and AIDS is extremely high in the province. There are few international or local NGOs's involved in the development of Kampot, and our programme apart from being one of the first of its kind in Cambodia is unique in this province.

Objectives: The aim is to care for in a profound manner, young orphaned or abandoned children who have suffered trauma and neglect. To help them, through a programme of loving attention and comprehensive cultural, scholastic and vocational training, to find a positive and healing path into the future.



The Entrance to the Kampot Traditional Music School for Orphaned and Disabled Children - Visitor's Day

Residential Programme: Our school cares for up to 35 children, orphaned mostly because of the AIDS epidemic, (formerly because of Malaria and the war). Some children have been abandoned or have a physical disability due to Polio or Tuberculosis. The children mainly come from remote villages in Kampot, where previously they received no care, or were neglected or marginalized. We provide sleeping facilities, food, clothing, medical care, material items and 24 hour adult supervision and counselling. We have a high number of adult staff in relation to the number of children resident, (1:2 ratio) to ensure real quality care and attention towards the individual child. We work in coordination with the Ministries of Social Action, Culture and Education, as well as the local provincial departments, district chiefs, human rights groups and other NGO's.



In the garden (residential child)

Outreach Programme: We also assist a further 160-170 local children from the surrounding community, who come to our school during the daytime only, to study music, ballet and for some to take academic lessons. Those children who come from very poor villages, also receive a meal at our school and all children are entitled to medical care whenever they need it. By providing services for the local community, we also help families over-burdened by poverty, their children learning positive cultural and scholastic education providing a resource for the future and helping prevent child-labour and juvenile delinquency.



Traditional Pin Peat music lesson with Maestro Maes Saem (children on Outreach Programme)

Cultural Programme: Our school specializes in the tuition of traditional classical Cambodian music, ballet and theatre, as a form of post-traumatic therapy, but also as a form of vocational training and as a way to preserve Cambodia's traditional arts and culture after the genocide of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. Our teaching staff come from the National Theatre and Cambodian Royal Ballet. We also have a programme to document and record traditional Cambodian music, to help ensure its survival, after the deaths of so many of the great masters during the Khmer Rouge period.



Traditional ballet practice

Scholastic & Creative Therapy Programme:

We teach academic subjects in line with the national curriculum, from pre-elementary level to university entrance level. Our teachers are fully qualified and frequent courses given by the Ministry of Education. Our children participate in national exams. The little children also have a creative therapy programme, where they can draw, paint, make up games and plays to help them express their inner-most feelings and gain emotional release. We are in touch with psychiatrists and therapists near Phnom Penh, in case of necessity.



Smaller children in one of their Creative-therapy classes



Teaching of academic subjects

Income-Generating Auto-Sufficiency Programme:

The school supports itself for the costs of administration, electricity, water, cooking fuel, mosquito nets, books, cooking and cleaning utensils etc. (approximately USD 8'500.00 to USD 9'000.00 per year). Our self-help activities include, monthly public concerts, performances at festivals, making and selling silk and cotton items, cultivating some fruit and vegetables, rearing ducks and fish and concerts given abroad by the director. We have also produced an own music CD for sale and are growing ornamental flowers to sell.

Vocational Training: Is also given to older resident children, as they begin to make choices about their future. Training includes, computer studies, foreign languages, sewing and tailoring, plastic arts, as well as many other categories which can also be taught outside our school, in cooperation with local businesses.



Children gathering flowers. Any child with a disability receives prosthetics/orthotics help from the "Cambodia Trust" in Sihanoukville Province



Catherine Geach (left) and Math Thiyu (right) mending a child's mattress

Our Staff: The school is run by our staff and our board of directors who are Cambodian. We live in a climate of tolerance, peace and religious respect. The total number of staff at our school is currently 16. The founder and chairperson, who is British, takes no salary and lives in Italy with her husband and their son. She makes regular visits to the Kampot Traditional Music School in Cambodia.

Achievements: Since 1994, over 350 grown up children have graduated, both those on our Residential programme and our Outreach programme. They have gone on to university, college, set up, or joined businesses, work at the Ministry, teach music, have become farmers, tailors, monks and some have families of their own now.



One of our classrooms



Mahouri music practice

“The caring of children cannot be a quick fix approach, in order to demonstrate high numbers; but a long process of steady building and healing, in order to equip each child to face the world when they grow up”.

*Catherine Geach
(Founder Kampot Traditional Music School)*

Image sources:

Lotus flower: *MorgueFile* by June C. Oka; Macro-image of Red Rose: *MorgueFile* by Anthony Marquette; all other pictures: *Picture-Archive Kampot Traditional Music School for Orphaned and Disabled Children*

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Opening Ceremony for Dance & Music Building

School Construction and Donors:

Our school consists of 4 buildings, the first 3 constructed in 1994, the 4th in 2002, with the financial help from the Governments of Japan, Britain and Canada. The buildings are equipped with sleeping facilities, dining hall, kitchen, disabled toilets and shower units, special paths for wheelchairs, classrooms, music and ballet practice rooms, documentation centre and library-toy room. The children also have swings, games and pet animals all in a large tree and flower-filled garden.

Our school was officially and most generously sponsored by Terre Des Hommes Netherlands for many years. We have also been assisted recently by *Reach out to Asia* and *21st Century Leaders Foundation* and in the past, *UNESCO*, *Save the Children Fund Australia*, *British Embassy Phnom Penh*, *Mensen In Nood*, *Kinderspostzegels*, *Ocean in a Drop*, *Cordaid Netherlands* and *OXFAM UK*. We currently need financial help for the categories of food, medicine, clothing, local transport, maintenance of school buildings and Cambodian staff salary support.



A deep Thank You to our Sponsors and an Invitation

to Donate: We would like to thank all our dear friends and sponsors, who have helped support our school for so many years and who continue helping us with their faithful and generous solidarity.

As our school is a non-governmental organisation we are only able to survive thanks to our official donors, income-generating activities and wonderful people who sustain us privately with their precious support and assistance.

Thank You from all our Hearts for Supporting us with your Donations and Good Will !

Every dollar goes directly into the programme. Nothing is wasted on overheads, administration or expatriate costs.

Board of Directors and Trustees/Accountability

The board of directors are Cambodian, the trustees are external.

A regular annual external audit is conducted.

A copy of our accounts is available on request.

Our school can be contacted in the following way:

Postal Address: KCDI, c/o PO Box 1417, Central Post Office, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

e-mail: info@kampot-music-school.com

Internet: www.kampot-music-school.com

To make an appointment, or for further information:

School Address: Kampot Traditional Music School, Plauv Ekareach, 1 Ousaphear, Khum Kampong Kandal, Kampot Provincial Province, Kampot Town, Cambodia

Tel: +855 (0)33 932 992 (Field Manager: Mr. You Chhuy)

Anyone who wishes to give a donation is welcome to do so.

Instructions for International Money Transfer (to donate in US-dollars):

Canadia Bank PLC., 265-269 Ang Duong Street, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

SWIFT (BIC): CADIKHPP, Account Number: 10.00.306.000.089

Beneficiary: Mr. You Chhuy/KCDI

Instructions for Money Transfer inside Europe (to donate in euros):

Schwyzer Kantonalbank, Postfach, CH-6410 Goldau, Switzerland

IBAN: CH83 0077 7001 9705 9144 9

SWIFT (BIC): KBSZCH22XXX, Account Number: 197059-1449

Beneficiary: Bruno Eichhorn*, Goldau, Kampot Traditional Music School

(*treasurer Swiss account of the Kampot Traditional Music School, Cambodia)

If you would like your donation to be acknowledged,
please write to us by electronic mail or ordinary post.