The University Student.

Kao Yinh is Foxglove's first scholarship student, starting a Bachelor of Commerce at a university in Kampot, a provincial city in the south of Cambodia.

We first met Kao Yinh in early 2019 when she was studying at the Hun Sen Secondary School. The headmaster introduced her proudly as the top student at just 17 years of age. Our first thought was that she must have come from a privileged background enabling her to maintain her studies and keep on track in the academic program. But we found something very different.

Kao Yinh comes from a single parent home. Her father left the family when she was 7 years old, leaving her mother to provide for three young children. Her mother earns her income in petit trade, selling goods at local markets. She had left school as a young girl but was determined to see her children with an education. And it has worked. All three siblings are strong students, leading their classes in academic terms but also personally aware of the struggle and challenges of poverty.

Kao Yinh applied for the Foxglove scholarship with a clear sense of direction. She has a dream of returning to her district as a mathematics teacher. She wants to help girls like herself aspire to higher education and vocational training. Breaking the cycle of factory labour and subsistence living from working in the rice fields.

It's her earnestness about the future and her concern for others that lead me to ask about the source of her strength and resilience. She barely hesitates. She tells me, "I want people to know that a single mother can raise their children to be successful. She has given us every opportunity. Now I can show my gratitude." And in a few sentences, I learn of her motivation and her strength. Another reminder that women sit silently behind so many stories. And Kao Yinh sees it.

Target 2020

$15,000

- **1 university student – second year**
- **1 university student – new**
- **1 toilet block – 4 toilets**
- **1 clean water and handwashing station**
- **300 sanitary kits**
- **10 health and hygiene courses**
- **1 opening ceremony**

Focus Cambodia

2019 IMPACT REPORT

FOXGLOVE PROJECT

2015 – 2020

Focus Cambodia is committed to improving access to high school education for teenage girls living in Kampot, a rural province in southern Cambodia.

Foxglove partners with a local NGO led by a local leader, born and raised in a local village. After many years working with international NGOs in Phnom Penh, returned to his rural community to address grassroots needs impacting living conditions and opportunities for the rural poor.

Poor sanitation in Cambodia is commonplace with up to 80% people without access to toilets or clean water. But this has a particular impact on teenage girls attending public school. Over five years, we planned to build toilet blocks, provide clean water points, and facilitate health and hygiene training for 6 secondary schools in partnership with provincial and local school authorities.

Secondly, we work with the schools and community leaders to highlight the opportunities that come with higher education. An opportunity that is overwhelmingly denied to young women. Without community consultation and education, the incidence of girls as young as 14 years old working long days in the rice fields or entering the expanding garment factories will continue to grow.

Foxglove Women

It is 2019 and we are visiting Foxglove's latest initiative, a toilet block in a government school in rural Kompot.

It is a secondary school accommodating 2000 students between year 10 to 12. About 900 girls. And I try to get my head around the fact that 900 girls between 16 -20 years old share 2 toilets with 1100 male students. They line up every class break to try and get to a toilet. And for the most part, it doesn't work. The girls explain the embarrassment of lining up with your schoolbag over your shoulder. Hearing the snickering and commentary. I try to remember being 17 years old and how I would have felt.

But on this day we came to celebrate. Foxglove, the school and local community have partnered to construct a new 5 person toilet block for the girls. And we are all excited. Everyone has come out to make speeches, tell stories, thank one another and sing the national anthem. It might be a toilet block but I still feel a little teary. I am keen to spend time with some of the girls and hear the difference it will make. After the formalities, including a test run of the toilets, we sit down to listen.

And it starts with a question. A genuine question. One of the female teachers asks, 'Why did you come? Why did you come to help at our school?"

It was a question coming from a sense of disbelief that we would care or be interested. It had no barb or cynicism. It was a simple question asking for a response. And as I looked around the table, the answer was obvious. Girls like Srey Pich and Sovanna, Sokha and Pisey, Leakhena, Chavy and Kong Kea.

At the end of the day it is people, young women, that I dream will have a future and real hope that they can realise their dreams with effort, commitment and opportunity. Every time we come to a school to contribute, to listen, we are telling them that we care. That we are interested. Because they are girls just like us trying to make their way. And we remember.

Srey Nite

Meet Srey Nite...she's 18 years old and getting ready to graduate.

It's a big achievement. And she is delighted. Her laughter, kindness and outgoing personality come easy. When we ask questions, Srey Nite is the first to answer. But she is careful and thoughtful. She looks about her and draws others into the conversation.

Srey Nite came to this school six years ago at the encouragement of her parents. They are older parents in Khmer society – now in their sixties – and her mum is frail and sickly. It worries her. Every day she helps with the home duties before riding the 5 kilometres to school to arrive by 7am and studying hard until 11am. It's too far to return home for lunch so she stays with her friends. Waiting for classes to recommence after lunch at 1pm. Then the ride home. Hoping to arrive before dark.

But the rewards can be rich. Srey Nite loves maths, physics and biology. Not chemistry she makes a point of explaining. And her desire is to study medicine. It is a difficult course and a difficult dream. She will need to sit the entrance exam after completing school and she will need to win a scholarship – available to the top 100 students in Cambodia. Without this it is impossible for her to move to Phnom Penh and continue with her studies.

But the challenge makes a little more sense when I ask her to describe herself in three words. It takes a few minutes, as she pauses and weighs up her responses, "I am friendly and outgoing. I like others and care about my friends. I am determined. I do not give up. You can be sure I will not give up. And I give me best. I try my hardest, especially for my family."

And then she smiles. The kind of smile that lights up the room. She likes her answers and her description. It fits her just right.

2019 INCOME
(Calendar Year)

$14,350

2019 EXPENDITURE
(Calendar Year)

$15,450

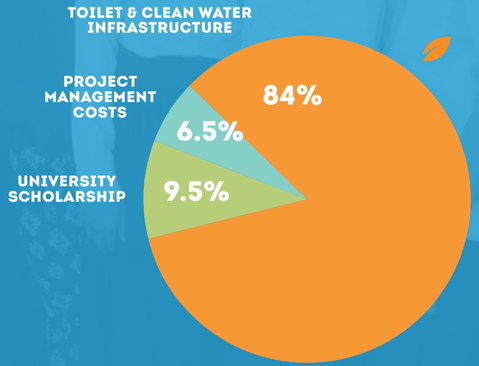
2019 Numbers

Foxglove and Focus Cambodia has directly impacted 900 female students and 1100 male students with the provision of working toilets, clean water points, and health and hygiene training.

Teachers and community members also have access to these facilities.

Focus Cambodia also supported the first Foxglove scholarship student into a university degree in commerce at a locally accredited university.

- **1 university scholarship for female student to study commerce**
- **1 toilet block with 5 toilets**
- **2 handwashing station**
- **2 clean water point for drinking**
- **1 rainwater catchment tank**
- **12 Health Living course for 900 girl students**
- **15 Basic Hygiene and Health course for 1100 male students**

Expenditure

- **Project Management Costs (Australia) 6.5%**
  Compliance, monitoring, administration, bank charges, receipting
- **Toilet & Clean Water Infrastructure 84%**
  Toilet block, handwashing station, clean water outlet
- **University Scholarship 9.5%**
  School fees, computer, uniform, course fees (English, computer).