



Taksenkangbloung Community Centre



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Taksenkangbloung Community Centre Inc.
ABN: 78 939 654 688

Annual report for the year ending 31 December 2020 – our seventh year in operation.

The organisation: History, context, aims and objectives	3
Messages from 2020	5
January – February 2020	5
March – early October	7
October – December	8
Looking forward: Challenges and goals for the coming year	9
Administrative matters: Structure and policies	10
Financial Reports	11
Statement of position	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Cumulative fundraising	15
Committee Members' Declaration	16

Incorporated Association Number: A0060836N

ABN: 78939654688

Taksenkangbloung Community Centre Inc.

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www.taksenkangbloung.org

The organisation: History, context, aims and objectives

The Taksenkangbloung Community Centre operates in a village near Siem Reap, Cambodia. The organisation's charitable purpose is to facilitate access to education for the village community. The Centre seeks to foster community and social inclusion and address some of the interlinked factors affecting access to education by providing daily engagement, basic sanitation and healthcare, and transportation support.

By encouraging shared ownership and decision-making at the local level the Centre aims to provide options and empower families in the community to maintain a more positive standard of living.

The Centre supports children to attend the local state school by providing uniforms and school supplies, transport support, basic health care, referrals, and supplementary tuition daily. The Centre also works with the families and caregivers of its students to encourage them to prioritise their child's education.

The Centre's curriculum and education programs are designed to supplement the national schooling delivered by local state schools.

The Centre also conducts outreach work in the village as needed. This may include the provision of food packages, assistance with basic sanitation and first aid, provision of clothing and food supplies, infrastructure improvement, classes, internet access, sporting activities and social events. The Centre's aim is to create a sense of community and a gathering space which can operate as a source of long-term motivation and education. The Centre employs five staff members from the local area; Local Director, two part-time English teachers who teach four groups of students for one hour per group each day, a teacher from the local state school on a part-time basis and a full-time, live-in childcare worker and caretaker, who also started facilitating a daily pre-school play class at the start of 2020 for up to 20 children.

In 2010, the Centre's co-founders were asked by a village leader to assist a family of 12 from Taksenkangbloung Village who were all living in a raised hut which was falling apart. The children were begging and scavenging every day to survive, and the parents were suffering from alcohol addiction. The founders were able to assist this family by repairing the hut and providing food packages. This family's situation, sadly, was not an isolated case in Taksenkangbloung village and there were many more who asked for help.

The Community Centre idea evolved from there and, in partnership with the village leaders, the Community Centre was launched in April 2014.

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The on-site Community Centre model was initially chosen because one-off assistance to encourage school attendance that had been provided to the village in the past had not worked effectively. Given the proximity of the village to the Angkor Temples and the instantaneous money gained from begging, many families would revert to sending children begging as soon as possible. Without close support and frequent follow-ups, the provision of bicycles and school supplies alone was not sufficient motivation to break the cycle of begging in favour of attending school. It was identified through observation and discussion with the village leaders that any assistance would need to be sustained to motivate for long-term change.

While attendance at the centre is open to all children in the village, targeted additional assistance can be provided to certain students on a needs basis in consultation with local leaders. Relevant factors include level of engagement, support from families and level of comparative disadvantage.

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Messages from 2020

This is the Community Centre's seventh annual report.

It would be an understatement to describe 2020 as unprecedented. Cambodia, thankfully, remained relatively COVID-free throughout 2020. This was both a necessity and a blessing, as Cambodia's basic and underfunded health system would have been stretched to the limit almost immediately had a substantial outbreak of the virus been able to take hold. Cambodia managed to keep the virus largely at bay during 2020 by locking down, closing schools and slamming borders shut early. However, the indirect impacts felt by the social and economic conditions occasioned by the virus have been savage.

January and February 2020 seem like a lifetime ago – but in those distant pre-COVID months, substantial progress was made toward advancing the Centre's key goals of ensuring foreign aid is provided in the most sustainable way possible. In step with the evolving needs of the community, a full review of the program structure was conducted in order to ensure that available resources are maximised to benefit the community's current needs.

Consultation with the community indicated that living standards and commitment to education have improved dramatically over the years the centre has been in operation. It was determined that the fully supported pilot program, which was a targeted intensive support model, would be scaled back because the majority of families no longer needed their children to be supplied with cooked meals. Consequently, the program focus was shifted purely to educational needs and expanding the beneficiary base accordingly. A trial phase of a redesigned program had commenced in January and February of 2020, as detailed below, but schools were closed and gatherings banned in March 2020 which saw all these goals grind to a temporary halt.

With borders closed and most of the world in lockdown, the effects of the lack of tourists in Siem Reap demonstrated how reliant the economy is on tourism, both directly and indirectly. Many families in Taksenkangbloung village found themselves out of work, or with substantially reduced income. The Centre was forced to pivot to a temporary crisis support model to ensure the community's safety.

January – February 2020

As part of a review to ensure the efficiency of programs and that programs were meeting the evolving needs of the community, Taksenkangbloung Community Centre was poised to enter a bold new era where support was able to be targeted directly at educational attainment, and less at the indirect facilitation of that attainment through removing other barriers such as access to food. This change in program focus represented a significant achievement for the Community Centre, which over its six years in operation had observed a significant improvement in the community's ability to provide for basic healthcare and nutrition needs and prioritization of education. Consequently, the Centre was

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able to trial entering a new phase where access to enhanced education and career opportunities could be provided for any child in the village, with additional targeted support where necessary.

As part of the new program design, all students who attend classes at the Centre would be provided with a uniform, shoes, bag and school supplies at the start of each school year. Transport support would also be provided to all students, whether it be via the centre's vehicle or bicycle. Computer and internet classes would be provided on Saturday mornings, and English tutoring would be provided to four groups of students for one hour each, 5 days per week alongside the catch-up classes/tutoring in the local Khmer curriculum 5 days per week.

The path to these goals was significantly bolstered by income from a Christmas party fundraiser held in December 2019, our generous sponsors and donors, and regular contributions from Piccolo Coffee Roasters of income generated by the sale of hessian coffee bags.

We were saddened to have bade a fond farewell to long-serving teaching director Sokhean, who after 6 years with the Centre had left to pursue other opportunities in a locality closer to his family home. However, we were very happy to have expanded our teaching team, with two new teachers (Ray Choi and Dara) joining Sinan, our fabulous Khmer curriculum tutor. This dynamic had improved class sizes, allocation and curriculum and heralded a new dawn of student engagement and enthusiasm.

Another string that was added to the Centre's bow in early 2020 was the commencement of pre-school play classes 6 days per week. These are designed to engage young students in structured classes and play before their school journey begins, and were generally attended by 15 – 20 children at commencement. These classes also represent an opportunity for development for existing staff member Reay, who has added facilitation of these classes to her duties as caretaker and childcare worker. With her time freed up in the kitchen in the middle of the day, this was a natural next step and something she took to fabulously with support from qualified Australian volunteers who attended in early 2020 to upskill her and assist in the commencement of these classes.

Australian volunteers, and our very first volunteers from America, who attended in early 2020 also helped the older students with English by sitting in on classes, and did some essential maintenance at the Centre including building and planting a large vegetable garden (for food security for staff and families in the village as needed) and the replacement of a rotting timber water tank stand with a new steel one.

Previous annual reports have outlined the failure of the chicken and duck breeding program. In addition to the above, our Australian and American volunteers also re-purposed the unused chicken shed and created a reading, relaxing and conversation area for students and families. A new steel front gate was also erected, as well as a donated shade sail.

We were also very proud of our long-serving Local Director Sothea, who was supported in commencing a university degree in IT.

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ABN: 78939654688

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March – early October

COVID-19 had well and truly taken hold on the world by March 2020. Cambodia, presumably in recognition of the vulnerability of its public health system and noting the volume of Chinese tourism, was one of the first countries in the world to aggressively close its borders.

In early March, all schools were closed by Government direction to minimise risk from the spread of COVID-19. While the Community Centre is part of the non-formal education sector, all on-site education and programs were ceased in line with this directive. A scaled-down compliment of staff consisting of Sothea and Reay continued to attend the centre so that welfare and circumstances in the village could be closely monitored. No visitors were accepted at the Centre unless socially distanced and for essential purposes.

The Board and local management quickly made the decision that savings from costs of running the ordinary programs that had to be cut, including transport, stationary, printing, teaching and internet, would be redirected into crisis support.

Donors and sponsors were advised of the shift in focus necessitated by the pandemic, and the description on the Centre's online donation portal was updated to reflect that, for the time being, all funds leftover from the costs of running ordinary programs, as well as any new donations, would be used as part of a temporary crisis support model.

In order to ascertain what this crisis support model should entail, Director Sothea surveyed families (in a socially distanced fashion and with PPE) to identify which families were most at need, and what those needs were. It was determined that food packages including vegetables and rice would be provided, with the amount of food to vary depending on how many people were in the family. Sanitation support would also be provided, including soap, masks, information about COVID-safe practices and access to showers and washing facilities as necessary.

Throughout this period, 75 families were provided with food, soap, masks and support monthly. This is most of the families in the village and represented 300 – 400 people.

Amid these unprecedented times, one of the most striking things to happen to the Centre was the support that immediately came our way. We were mindful that COVID-19 and associated restrictions were affecting everyone in the world, and with planned fundraising activities unable to proceed we were prepared for some pretty lean times. However, our supporters, sponsors and donors immediately came to our aid, in the most generous and humbling ways, in many cases increasing their contributions in circumstances where anyone could have forgiven them for reducing them. Some very large donations were received from all over Australia and, unexpectedly, other parts of the world.

The response during 2020 further demonstrates the trust and commitment that the Centre's committee of management has instilled among our community of supporters.

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We managed to pass through this period without any known infections in the village, while through the above measures managing to soften the blow of lockdowns and loss of income.

October – December

In mid-October 2020, restrictions were eased and the Government directive on school closures was lifted. Cambodia, while remaining behind closed borders, started to stir from the slumber of lockdown and the Centre slowly started resuming ordinary services. Monthly support packages were delivered for the final time in early October.

On the first day of re-registration for programs, 90 students attended. This is a record, and demonstrates that the expanded education support model will be a success. Interest in resuming schooling was very, very strong.

A sizeable personal donation was received to enable the purchase of the uniforms and school supplies needed to kick off the new school year in the context of the newly designed program. Additionally, after having paid tribute earlier in 2020 on the sudden and sad passing of one of our greatest supporters and early Taksen Pioneer Deborah Lunny, a memorial “bash” for Debbie’s birthday was held in Brisbane in November which bought in some amazing generous donations in “Crickie’s” name.

Things progressed in relative normality until a second, shorter lockdown was announced in December, with public schools closing again following a small outbreak in Phnom Penh. These restrictions were thankfully short-lived, and programs were shortly re-started at the Centre with smaller classes sizes and students wearing facemasks in line with government requirements.

More donations were generously provided in the lead up to Christmas, in addition to further proceeds from the sale of hessian bags thanks t Piccolo Coffee Roasters and an additional donation from Warrnambool College’s Merri house.

As 2020 draws to a close, Cambodia appears to have emerged relatively unscathed from a health perspective, with only a handful of cases reported in Siem Reap throughout 2020. We hope things stay that way as we look forward to 2021 and focus on moving forward with our new and dynamic program model.

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Looking forward: Challenges and goals for the coming year

Our greatest hope and goal for 2021 is that Cambodia can emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and begin to welcome tourists again. We also look forward to properly embarking on our new program structure.

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Administrative matters: Structure and policies

The Community Centre is a small, grass-roots organisation designed to create social inclusion for vulnerable families. It is an Incorporated Association under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, which is administered by Consumer Affairs Victoria, and a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. It has an ABN and is a registered Victorian Fundraiser. It operates in accordance with financial reporting and other accountability standards required of an Australian registered charity. Additionally, it is registered in Cambodia with the Ministry of the Interior as a Local Non-Government Organisation.

Yearly financial reporting to those institutions is undertaken as required. Additionally, the Community Centre adheres to internal financial reporting processes that ensure the Board is provided with up to date financial reporting throughout the year. Through the mechanism of quarterly meetings, the Board oversees expenditure and projects and receives a detailed operational update from local Cambodian staff through its operations liaison.

The Australian Board works very closely with the local staff and ensures operational decision-making is driven from the local level, led by the local Director, Sothea, in consultation with the community and village leaders. This operational partnership with the village and local staff ensures shared ownership of the Centre as a productive addition to the community.

We have strict responsible volunteering protocols and only engage volunteers as needed to support qualified local staff who are earning wages. We would never deprive a qualified local person with the opportunity to work by replacing them with a volunteer.

The Community Centre's main support model is collective sponsorship alongside various fundraising events in Australia and one-off donations.

Policies which ensure services are delivered safely and responsibly are available on request by emailing us at the address below.

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Financial Reports

These financial statements are lodged with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission in accordance with financial reporting obligations. They are lodged as part of our commitment to our sponsors and supporters to remain open and transparent. They show you our cash flow and what your donations have been used for.

Our reporting period ends on 31 December each year. All values contained within the reports are in Australian Dollars.

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Statement of position

As at 31 December 2020. All amounts contained within this report are in Australian dollars.

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash		
Cash at bank	19,560	6,365
Cash in hand	1,469	2,740
Total Cash	21,029	9,105
Other Current Assets	0	0
Total Other Current Assets	0	0
Total Current Assets	21,029	9,105
Non Current Assets		
Land & Buildings at Cost		
Taksen Community Centre	11,263	11,263
Total Land & Buildings	11,263	11,263
Motor Vehicles At Cost		
5 Start Transport	3,765	3,765
Total Motor Vehicles	3,765	3,765
Plant & Equipment		
Furniture	455	455
Tools	120	120
Chickens & Ducks	186	186
Pump	134	134
Washing Machine	561	561
Filing Cabinet	189	189
Bicycles	259	259
Fans (Classroom)	37	37
Vegetable Garden Setup	53	53
Printer	186	186
Tables & Bookshelves	432	432
Total Plant & Equipment	2,612	2,612
Other Non Current Assets	0	0
Total Other Non Current Assets	0	0
Total Non Current Assets	17,640	17,640
TOTAL ASSETS	38,669	26,745
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Total Current Liabilities	0	0

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Non Current Liabilities		
Total Non Current Liabilities	0	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0	0
NET ASSETS	38,669	26,745
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Balance Brought Forward	26,731	37,444
Capital Reserves	0	0
Accumulated Surplus	11,939	(10,713)
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	38,669	26,731
INCOME		
Government Grants	0	0
Donations/Bequests – Cash	16,427	6,481
Donations/Bequests – Assets	0	0
Sponsorship	16,488	13,872
Sales – Livestock	0	256
Sales – Mushrooms	0	0
Fundraising	5,959	6,138
TOTAL INCOME	38,874	26,747
EXPENSES		
Employee Expenses		
Australia	0	0
Cambodia	12,568	17,536
Grants		
Within Australia	0	0
Outside Australia	0	0
Other Expenses (in Cambodia)		
Bank Fees	724	389
Licences, Fees & Permits	188	2,398
Outreach Program	7,454	174
Food & Other Consumables	2,281	8,590
Livestock Expenses	95	547
Building Materials/Labour	0	0
Petrol & Oil	1,144	2,101
Utilities	349	351
Repairs	227	616
School Uniforms/Shoes	0	1,085
School Books/Resources	677	1,151
Computer Consumables/Internet	408	704
Cultural/Ceremonial Expenses	15	222
Staff Training	0	0
Total Other Expenses (in Cambodia)	13,563	18,328

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Other Expenses (in Australia)		
Australian Funding Expenses	445	1,122
Total Other Expenses (in Australia)	445	1,122
TOTAL EXPENSES	26,576	36,986
Other Income/Expenses		
Foreign Exchange Gain/(Loss)	(360)	(474)
Loss on Sale of Non Current Assets	0	0
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	11,939	(10,713)

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Cumulative fundraising

All amounts contained within this report are in Australian dollars.

Fundraiser	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Totals
Trivia Night - Flying Horse	3,286							3,286
Cinema Nights	1,427	1,536		1,604				4,567
Como Theatre	220							220
Burger Night	2,253							2,253
School fundraiser	130							130
Climbing Speech	1,360							1,360
Painting Sales - Archie Grahan Centre	305	25						330
Crowd Funding - Chia Family	405							405
Christmas Cards & Gifts	3,740	2,530	1,050	1,030	855	180	517	9,902
Crossfit Warrnambool Fundraisers		550		684				1,234
Feb Fast		1,000						1,000
Australia Day		1,909						1,909
Mothers Day		100						100
Birthday fundraiser		120						120
Private donation		1,945		3,500				5,445
Private donation		1,688						1,688
Private donation		820						820
Sober September		3,750						3,750
My Home Near Angkor Wat book sales			2,168	786	322	10		3,286
Breakfast fundraiser			141					141
Jam for Taksen			2,343					2,343
Morning Tea fundraiser			298					298
Hessian Bag Sales				455	713	245	513	1,926
Golf Day				1,398				1,398
Birthday fundraiser				320	427			747
Morrococ Dinner				1,180	3,147			4,327
Taksen Host Roast					1,565	1,615		3,180
Drink Bottle Sales					180	418	144	742
Taksen Garden Party						3,670	215	3,885
Crick's Birthday Bash							4,570	4,570
Totals	13,126	15,973	6,000	10,957	7,209	6,138	5,959	65,362

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Taksenkangbloung Community Centre Inc. Committee Members' Declaration

Per section 60.15 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013,

The committee Members declare that in the committee members' opinion:

- (a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and
- (b) the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013.

Signed 

Elly Taylor

Name _____
President

Position _____

Taksenkangbloung Community Centre Inc.

Dated this **5th** day of **June 2021**

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