

Cambodia Rural Students Trust – introducing our student

My name is Chhengheang and I am 18 years old. I graduated from Future Bright International School high school in 2021 and I got a grade of C and also got a Certificate of Appreciation from the school. Nowadays I just finished my English program and preparing for college students (freshman) and I will start my class next month. I am going to study Business Administration at Pannasastra University of Siem Reap in short, which we call (PUCSR). It is the best school in Siem Reap and its focus is on English Language only.

Before I joined CRST, I studied at a rural school, 10 km from home. I went to school on my own motorbike. Just spend around 15 minutes at the school because there are not many traffic jams. I would study from 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM, and in the afternoon start from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. In addition, I took extra classes or part-time classes, but I had to pay for it, one subject was \$3.75 in one month. My family did not have enough money to support my studies because there were 4 people in the family, my two older brothers were studying and I was the youngest including my father. Moreover, he is the only one who supports me and my brothers for everything. Sadly my mother died in 2010 of breast cancer when I was 5 years old. Although my mother goes far away from this world, my father always encouraged me and my brothers to continue our education and move on and he moved to live in the pagoda and leave the house alone. It is not easy to live in a pagoda. My family was despised in every way and had to ask for food to eat every day. I do not why I have just known that some people there did not like me and hurt me and beat me. Because I am a girl? Maybe. The pagoda does not allow the girl to live there with boys or men. My father took me to live in my aunt's house, he thinks that it will be good for me if I live with my aunt, nevertheless, I did not feel good, I cried every day and I got sick. 1 later, my father went to visit me; he saw my situation and apologized for leaving me alone. Then he took me back to the pagoda. I was joyful when I met my lovely brothers. Moreover, my father asked the pagoda director to allow me to live just to get an education. After that, my dad became a monk. I lived there for 10 years and I study in grade 10. It is time that I heard the name of the CRST NGO, which gives scholarship opportunities for poor students to continue their education. I applied, but I failed. The next year, I applied for this scholarship again and passed.

What made me want to get this scholarship is that I saw the hardships of my father who tried to raise me despite being despised by others. He strongly encouraged me to study hard because only knowledge can achieve my goals and make my life better and better. However, I still worry about my father's health. Finally, I decided to come to Siem Reap City. The first day in SR city and when I came into the NGO I felt nervous and cried. To make this story not too long, I will tell you a short and important point, what did I learn from the CRST NGO? I have learned how to live without family. It has made me more confident, I know a lot of people including CRST students, and how to adapt myself to the real world, helping each other in the community or someone who asks me for help I will help if I can. I know how to use email, Computer, and my English is getting better. The first time I came to Siem Reap, I felt that I was very lucky to be able to study in a modern city because so many students did not have the opportunity like me. I used to wonder what it was like in the city. I live in the city now and am sure it is a place that motivates me to continue improving myself. And besides my family, CRST is my second family. Not only that I will let you know about an interesting Department and Project that made me unforgettable. The first one is the Community Service Department. In short, we call the CS Department this Dep. helps build houses for families who are homeless or have a very poor living standard and are difficult to live in, as families with children still in school and still encouraging their children to go to school. I have been involved in building houses many times. And it always makes me very happy, because I used to be homeless before, so I can know how they feel when they get

a decent place to stay in the rain or wind. In particular, I feel like contributing to something for them. And seeing their smiles makes me very excited. Only one day we completed the house for them and we also have over 100 students in the NGO for help. The second is Project B, which B stands for Bicycle. Bike for education. We have two processes in this Project, we do bike donations and we repair their old or broken bikes for them. I have also participated many times. And to my surprise, the students came to school even though the house was far from school and they were still small. And some of them ride old bikes and find it difficult to get to school. And this project provided them with comfortable bikes as part of their education.

I have three roles in the NGO. I am a Campus assistant manager and also Admin Campus who helps to control our Campus and manage the entire plan in the Campus Department. Second, I am part of the Project V team which stands for Volunteer and last I am one of Project R's education team members who lead the entire PR workshop and lead the workshop to educate students about the environment in the rural school. I am also one of the Rotaract Club of Siem Reap members and on the fundraising committee, I really love this position. I was surprised that I am very young but I have a lot of responsibilities. However, I have learned a lot about them as well. Like how to be a patient person or a younger leader.

Sadly my father passed this year in April after being sick since Khmer New Year. My brothers and I tried to take him to the hospital and try to find many ways to help him but we couldn't because he had heart and kidney disease. Although I did not write much about the warm relationship I had with my dad, I really loved him so much that apart from his mother he died; only my dad played the role of father and mother and he was willing to raise me. One child without taking another wife for fear of being abused. Even though the pagoda was despised, he persevered until the children finished school. While I live in the City but when I am free, I always visit and bring to visit and bring something to him. Like pizza or seafood that he never ate before and you know he always calls me every time and asks me if I have eaten lunch yet or do I have food to eat or not. Yes for sure it makes me feel very down but celebrating the funeral for him well and also with the financial support from the Palti family and all the students of the NGO who helped in the program.

Anyway, I will not give up my commitment to do my best to complete my goal. Now my brothers also study at the National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor. In short, we call NPIA, which is a school study about electronics. My second brother is a monk. Last but not least I would like to say I am very thankful to the Palti family that is always beside me, encouraging, and supporting me in everything. And I would love to thank you again for Sponsoring me. You are a part of my success with my education.