

## Xavier Jesuit School Scholarships Cambodia



*XJS Scholarship Students enjoying a learning excursion.*

## Country Context

Cambodia remains one of the poorest countries in Asia, with a population of 16.5 million people. Many of those who survived decades of conflict have been plunged into poverty, with 12.9% of the population living below the national poverty line<sup>1</sup>.

Around half of Cambodia's population is aged under 25 years. The country is depending on its children and young people to pave the way towards a better future free from poverty.

Cambodia has faced an educational crisis since the destruction caused by the Khmer Rouge. Even before the pandemic, only 73% of children had finished primary school and 26% of children at secondary school age were attending secondary education classes<sup>2</sup>.

The Jesuits have a long history of working in Cambodia dating back to the 1980s in refugee camps. Today, there are 29 international Jesuit Priests, Brothers and Scholastics missioned to Cambodia and one young Cambodian Jesuit. The Jesuit works include education, health, disability, agriculture, ecology and community development programs.

## About the project

The Jesuits are committed to improving the quality of education in Cambodia and established the Xavier Jesuit School (XJS) in 2015.

XJS is run by our partner, Jesuit Service Cambodia (JSC). The school is located in Sisophon, one of the poorest provinces in Cambodia, to provide quality education to young people from surrounding rural regions. The school comprises of a primary school (kindergarten to grade six), a secondary school (grades seven to 12), a teacher resource centre, and a community learning centre for remedial and extra tuition for kids from local public schools.

**55 students** at XJS will be supported with scholarships in 2023 to work towards a brighter future for themselves, their families and communities.

This scholarship program provides support to students in grades seven to twelve at XJS. The funds cover costs such as food, hostel accommodation, school fees, uniforms and the costs of carers at the hostels.

These scholarships target students who display a willingness to learn and who may not otherwise be able to access education due to factors such as living in remote

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.adb.org/search?keywords=SOCIAL%20IMPACT%20ASSESSMENT&page=1&source=suggest>

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.unicef.org/country/khm/>

villages. The selection process involves exams, interviews and visits to the homes of the students.

### **Key project activities include:**

#### **Schooling**

- **Providing education to hostel scholarship students at XJS.**

Students attend regular classes throughout the year as well as remedial classes and tutoring sessions where extra support is needed. Monthly exams are conducted, and the results were shared with caretakers for follow-up.

- **Distributing study materials to each scholarship students.**

Study materials are provided to help students enhance their learning across a broad range of areas, such as English, Mathematics, Khmer, and Physics.

#### **Hostel living**

- **Students contribute to hostel living and take part in learning how to care for themselves within the broader hostel community.**

Living in the hostel community provides the opportunity for students to grow as a person who can contribute positively to building up Cambodian society. The students are involved in community responsibilities and learn to live more independently. Each day, students help in the garden, kitchen and maintain their rooms. Group activities include regular reflection and group sharing as well as participation in school clubs for sports, information technology, dancing, and music.

- **Year-round hostel formation activities**

In addition to academic learning, scholarship students also learn collaboration, communication, consideration, service, and compassion.

- **Mentoring support for students**

Monthly mentoring meetings will be available for students to discuss any academic or other issues they may be encountering. Hostel caretakers will receive training in mentoring skills to ensure they are able to offer appropriate and useful mentoring support.

## Project outcomes and measures

The overall goal of the project is to support scholarship students to achieve an increase in their academic scores, exhibit high motivation towards their studies, and manifest leadership skills and good values in the school as well as in the hostel.

This is broken down into the key objectives with measurable indicators to assess outcomes and impact.

Key Objective	Measurable indicators
Scholarship students become accomplished Grade 12 students and well-educated individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are promoted to the next grade level.</li> <li>• The rate of students successfully completing their studies and achieving passing scores in the Grade 12 National Exams.</li> <li>• Improved academic scores.</li> </ul>
Scholarship students can lead others and live harmoniously with the other members of the hostel community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior scholarship students can guide younger scholarship students in their studies and daily community life.</li> <li>• Students' satisfaction level with hostel life measured via interviews and survey.</li> <li>• Mentoring skills of caretakers improved.</li> <li>• Students' engagement level in daily shared tasks, homework, and class attendance.</li> </ul>

Student engagement in schooling and hostel life as well as the caretakers' effectiveness in their roles will be monitored by XJS staff. In turn, the achievement of project outcomes will be measured. Jesuit Mission Australia staff review regular written and financial reporting from XJS; attend regular update meetings (remotely) and monitoring visits when possible, and provide advice on a range of project management, monitoring and evaluation areas.

## Budget

In 2023, the planned budget for this project is \$45,000 inclusive of Jesuit Mission Australia Administration 10%. The partner budget has been converted from USD at 0.62.

## Potential for Pilgrims 100 members to visit

XJS welcomes visitors and can arrange for groups to visit the student centres to meet students and staff and understand more about the importance of these facilities.

## Hear their Stories

### Laiheang

Laiheang is a grade 10 student who has been residing and studying at the XJS hostel since October 2019.

Since she joined XJS with the help of a scholarship funded by Jesuit Mission supporters, Laiheang shared that she has been able to learn better, and her family has been relieved of the financial burden of paying her tuition fees.

According to Laiheang, living together in the hostel allows students to learn many things and provides opportunities to develop their minds and thinking.

Laiheang is a keen learner with a bright future ahead of her, thanks to the education support her scholarship has given her.

She shared that she wants to study hard to become a forensic scientist.

***"I want to become a person who contributes to expelling injustice from society... I think it's important to study hard and develop the ability to continue helping others."***

