



# AKUN ANNUAL REPORT 2023

## *Our Mission and About Us*

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Our mission is to improve the lives of those in desperate situations and in personal crises by providing shelter, food, education, and hope.

AKUN was founded in 2015 by a small group of women who wanted to make a difference. All members of our team are volunteers. We are small but mighty – demonstrated through the many accomplishments we have achieved over the years. Our focus is on small scale projects that can have a big impact on those involved. We focus on raising awareness of desperate situations, with a view to helping whenever possible. We work with communities, giving support when we can, to those in vulnerable positions. Realizing that young people are the foundation of the future of their communities, our programs are often centered on children and young people. We work to give them hope and a path out of poverty, into a better future.

## *President's Letter*

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During 2023, AKUN has seen a number of changes, both within our board and our programs. AKUN began the year with a change of President and Vice President. Linda stepped down from her role as President and I began my two-year term. At the same time, I resigned as Vice President and Sunday Feeding Program Chair with Linda stepping into both roles. We had both been in our positions since AKUN was founded in 2015. As we navigate our new roles, we have had great support from the rest of the board, which we are both grateful for. Unfortunately, two of our volunteers Shari

and Rachael had to step back from the board in 2023, due to family commitments. We thank them for all they have done and wish them well. We were pleased to welcome Tera as AKUN Secretary at our September meeting. Thanks to Tera for her time and commitment.

Our projects have seen some changes this year. Pam has developed the Scholarship Program further, with Maria providing great assistance with regard to translating correspondence and applications from our Guatemalan students and their school. During Linda's trip to Cambodia in November, she had fruitful discussions with Fr. Giovanni. As a result they agreed to a change of focus for the Sunday Feeding Program, which would include a name change! Linda was also able to meet with AKUN's scholarship students for dinner in Phnom Penh, giving them their scholarship certificates and continuing an important link with them. Whilst there, she learnt that Fr. Giovanni, who oversees the activities in Chumkiri, would be leaving his role and a new priest would take over the parish in 2024. We look forward to continuing our work within the Chumkiri community.

Overall, 2023 was both a year of change and of new beginnings for AKUN. Change is an inevitable part of life, and we have seen it with the evolution of both the SFP and the Scholarship Program. This year's new beginnings relate to the 3 projects we decided to fund in Namibia. We are building new relationships there, as well as helping to meet the basic needs of children. These programs have enabled AKUN to further our mission in supporting those in desperate need by providing food, education, and most importantly hope. With the support of our donors, we hope 2024 will be an even better year for AKUN and for those we support.

Barbara Sanders

# *Sunday Feeding Program*

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This program feeds 'bobo' to between 50 and 150 children most Sundays of the year. It creates a sense of community thanks to the activities organized by the Youth group. Kids in the program grow up to become part of the Youth team if they want to. Some go on to apply for our scholarship program.

The SFP runs in three villages: the Youth organizes the children in Chumkiri as it's the largest program while Phum Or and Tropeang Skun feed a smaller number of children. This program is administered by Linda Franks, AKUN's Vice President.

## **2023 RECAP**

We have noticed this year that attendance on Sundays has been variable. We are pleased to see that the children seem to be better taken care of in general. There is a great need to help with education and soft skills in this rural area still negatively affected by the last war. We partner with the local Catholic Church as the SFP is held in their grounds and the priest is our main contact there. Fr Giovanni replaced Fr Gianluca in 2022 and has settled in very well.

## **PROGRAM FUNDING**

AKUN gives the SFP \$100/week to fund the making of the 'bobo' over the three locations so a total of \$5200 for 2023. We also give \$120 per year to the Youth group to visit families in need and give them rice, cooking oil, new towels..etc as they need.

## **BIG NEWS**

We changed the name from SFP to SCP, Sunday Children Program!

Fr Giovanni will leave early 2024 for a new job in Italy! Fr Daniel Yoon will replace him very soon.

## **THE FUTURE**

As reflected in the program's new name, our focus will move to the 'whole child' with an emphasis on the children's overall wellbeing, education and social skills, while

continuing to fund the ingredients for the bobo. We look forward to working with Fr Daniel Yoon and continuing to serve the children in these communities!

## *Scholarship Program*

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This program was created in 2018 to honor the life of Sarah Meredith Fouad, the daughter of one of AKUN's members, who passed away at the age of 19. The program currently sponsors scholarships for qualified students in Cambodia and Guatemala, and is awarded on a yearly basis, renewable until degree or certification is received, as long as passing grades are achieved.

There is a selection process and well-defined criteria a student must meet in order to qualify for scholarship. All current students have met AKUN's criteria by our local contacts in each country. It is imperative to the program's success to have someone who can verify student details, the course program, and handle funds distribution. The program is administered by Pamela Meredith and Maria Saenz, two AKUN volunteers.

### **PROGRAM FUNDING**

Annual goal for program: \$3000

Balance from 2022: \$7,229.03

Amount donated 2023: \$5,013.51

It costs approximately \$500-900 per year to sponsor a student scholarship to university or trade school. Seven students were sponsored in 2023. Two students graduated! Four are currently pursuing 4-5 year degree programs. The remaining student is completing a two-year trade school certificate.

In 2023, the program raised \$5,013.51 consisting of \$1776.32 from the annual Facebook fundraiser, \$850 from Shell's double matching donation program, and \$2387.19 from direct sponsorship. A total of \$6,075 was spent to support students in

2023. The balance of \$5,657.54 on our books is intended to support current students through the end of their studies, as well as sponsor new students in 2024.

### **SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS**

<b>STUDENT NAME</b>	<b>DEGREE</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>
Phon Ponleu	Computer Science	1 of 4	Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology
Sorm Sarunn	Electrical Engineering	1 of 4	National Technical Training Institute
In Srey Touch	Chemistry	Graduated this year!	The Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Sam Vicheka	History	3 of 4	The Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Noun Minea	Civil Engineering	3 of 5	Norton University, Cambodia
Araceli Roxana Perez Diaz	Bachillerato in Science and Diploma in Ecotourism	Graduated this year!	Liceo Urrutia CEE, Guatemala
Mileidy Sarai SicalVillatoro	Bachillerato in Science and Diploma in Ecotourism	1 of 2	Liceo Urrutia CEE, Guatemala

### ***PROGRAM COMMUNICATION***

Updates on students' progress are posted on Facebook and AKUN's website.

### ***STRATEGIC PLANS GOING FORWARD***

Some plans we have to improve this program:

- Continue to identify families and/or organizations to provide direct sponsorship of current students to ensure sufficient funds are available for new students to receive scholarships from the Sarah Meredith Fouad scholarship fund each year.
- Expand scholarship opportunities in other regions/countries as needed and where accountable, secure local oversight is available.

## *New Programs in 2023*

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This year we were delighted to be able to fund new programs, based in Namibia.

Firstly, AKUN agreed to fund books for a school library at Havana High School in Windhoek, following a request by Esther Tobias, the Chief Librarian for state schools in Namibia. Barbara was able to meet Esther and visit the school, where she found a modern well-furnished library, in desperate need of books. AKUN was able to spend \$720 on books which were purchased in Namibia and donated during November and December.

AKUN also agreed to donate \$500 to the Child Intervention and Disability Support Centre in Windhoek. The funds would be used to purchase 3 televisions to support a new phonics program, as well as other parts of the curriculum. Unfortunately, this project is currently on hold, as the center is unsure whether it will be able to continue, mainly due to issues with funding. We will revisit this proposal again later in 2024.

The final project AKUN funded in Namibia this year, was a weekly lunch program at Mbambazi Primary School in the Zambezi Region of Namibia. Having lost their sponsor, the program held on Wednesdays, feeding 132 children, was due to end in August. Northern Namibia is currently suffering drought conditions, leading to a reduction in work opportunities, which in turn has impoverished the community there. The principal, Mr. Simasiku, explained the vital role the weekly lunch program has for the children's learning and for their health. He also told us the impact it has on the number of children attending the school. AKUN was able to fund the program from September till the end of 2023 for \$375.52.

We kept in close contact with the school, saw the program in action, and received photos and videos of the project. Having seen the desperate need for the program, AKUN will continue to fund the weekly lunches throughout 2024!

## *Financial Summary*

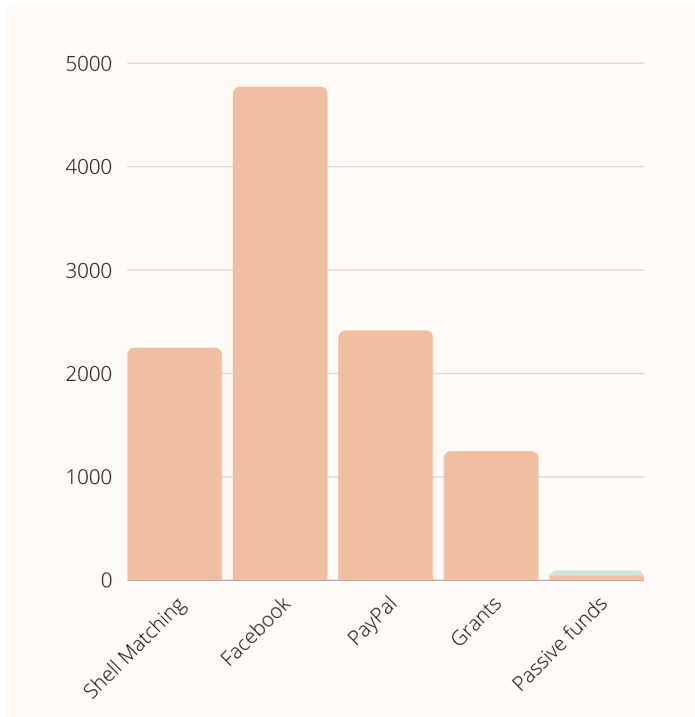
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We started the new year 2024 with a healthy balance in our account of \$12,950. Our Treasurer ensures we file our US tax documents each year and keeps track of all incoming and outgoing funds.

### **FUNDS RAISED IN 2023**

AKUN fundraised via market sales, Facebook fundraisers, and presentations to interested groups as well as passive methods.

Graph showing sources of income in US\$ for 2023

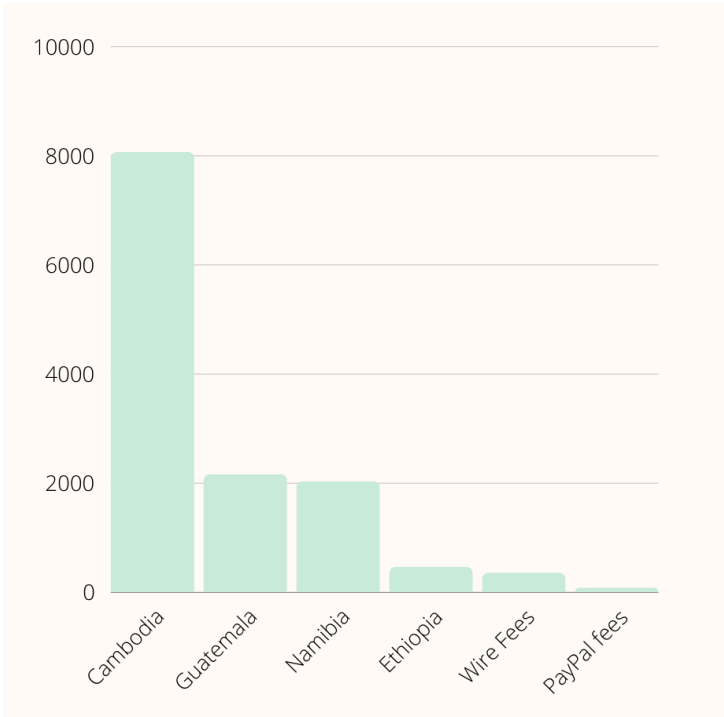


Passive funds: bank interest and AmazonSmile/book sales

**FUNDS DISTRIBUTED IN 2023**

We sent funds to Cambodia, Guatemala and Ethiopia for scholarship students. New projects in Namibia and transfer fees are also accounted for.

Graph shows AKUN's expenditure in US\$ for 2023



**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS  
FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!**

[www.supportakun.org](http://www.supportakun.org)