



LIVE AND LEARN

CHARITY CEO LUCY PERRY'S WORK IS CHANGING THE LIVES OF SOME OF THE WORLD'S POOREST PEOPLE. SHE SHARES WHAT MOTIVATES HER

Originally a small orphanage, Sunrise Cambodia is now a world-class organisation helping at-risk families and communities in some of the most poverty-stricken provinces of Cambodia.

Q What are Sunrise Cambodia's main causes?

It favours community development, which includes funding schools, health centres, sanitation and water projects, as well as infrastructure like bridges, and support for families as a whole. Sometimes the villages need extra support just to stay above the poverty line and keep their children safe and well.

Geraldine Cox and Lucy Perry have taken Sunrise Cambodia from strength to strength



Clockwise from left: Lucy Perry (right) and Geraldine Cox; supporting children through school; new weather-proof homes

Q Tell us about the new Brains Trust Appeal.

The appeal aims to raise A\$500,000 (S\$498,250) to fund vocational training for 1,000 young Cambodians, giving them the skills they need for long-term employment.

Cambodia is still suffering from the aftermath of Pol Pot's slaughter of almost a quarter of the population [from 1975 onwards].

Today, Cambodia struggles with a lack of qualified academics and experienced tradespeople. Millions live in grinding poverty, desperate for a chance to learn and live with purpose. If we can achieve our target, more people will have access to education beyond school, [vocational training to become a chef, for example] and we'll see a road to recovery for this beautiful country.

Q How did you get involved in charities?

After 20 years leading a creative services firm, I was itching for a new adventure. My first professional role in this sector was the CEO of a women's health charity. In less than three years, my

team raised A\$3,000,000 (S\$2,989,000) for a network of hospitals in Ethiopia. Knowing my work can change the lives of some of the world's poorest people is what motivates me.

Q When Sunrise Cambodia founder and legendary humanitarian Geraldine Cox approached you to lead the charity, did you need time to think about it?

She won me over with her dedication to the cause. Geraldine had been slogging it out on her own to raise A\$2,000,000 (S\$1,993,000) a year with a strategy based on good public relations and keynote speaking. But at age 70, with a serious cancer scare behind her, she was looking for a creative fundraiser to secure her legacy so that she could take a break.

Q Who are your role models?

The people we serve in Cambodia. I have

pictures of them on the wall by my desk. When I feel like I'm winning on their behalf, I grin at them. When I'm losing, I can't even look up at them. I'm also inspired by feminist icon Gloria Steinem, who at 82 is still fighting for women's rights, and of course, Geraldine Cox.

Q What's the secret to successful fundraising?

Fun! If supporting a charity is fun and engaging, donors will never let you go. As part of the Brains Trust Appeal we have produced hand-knitted, brain-shaped beanies (available at sunrisecambodia.org.au/shop). The sale of each beanie covers the

cost of learning materials for vocational training for one Cambodian student.

Q What's a typical weekday like for you?

I may spend a few days in the Sunrise Cambodia fundraising office [in Australia] working with my team, followed by a couple of days on the road, meeting donors or presenting.

Q What lessons do you hope to impart to your children?

I hope they grow up to be courageous and kind. I hope they are willing to fight the good fight. And I really hope they take pleasure in the simple things. ✕

For more information about Sunrise Cambodia, visit sunrisecambodia.org.au.