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Marist Solidarity Cambodia



*Information Booklet*

***Be in solidarity with the young, especially the most disadvantaged, providing them with the means of achieving their full potential through education, life-building support and employment opportunities where their needs and rights are respected.***



# ***HISTORY – MARIST SOLIDARITY CAMBODIA***

In 1998 the Marist Brothers from the Province of Sydney Australia, together with members of staff, Cambodian and foreign, established LaValla School, an elementary school for young Cambodians with physical disabilities. Classes commenced June 22 1998 in rented premises, #78, Street 430 in Phnom Penh.

The commitment made in 1998 to help young, physically handicapped Cambodians go as far as possible with their formal schooling meant that members of the first group to complete their elementary schooling at LaValla looked to the school for further assistance. For a period of time LaValla and some staff provided accommodation for ex-students beginning high school.

In 2002 Yodiffee, (Youth with Disabilities Foundation for Education and Employment) was established with the assistance of the Marist Fathers of Australia. Its purpose was to support young Cambodians with physical disabilities as they accessed secondary and tertiary education or sought opportunities for skills training. Further, Yodiffee was committed to helping those young people to find employment or to establish themselves independently in small businesses.

In 2005 again with the assistance of the Australian Marist Fathers, Villa Maria was built and LaValla and Yodiffee separated to operate independently yet collaboratively.

In 2010 LaValla School and Yodiffee began the process of amalgamation to become Marist Solidarity Cambodia. Now, in 2013, Marist Solidarity Cambodia encompassing LaValla School, Villa Maria and all of the projects initiated by Yodiffee, operates under the aegis of Australian Marist Solidarity and is governed locally by its own Board of Directors.

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*At computer training class*



*Mr. Soam Vanda at his Barber shop*



# ***VISION and MISSION***

## **Our vision**

is of an inclusive community where concern for individual human development makes education a high priority.

## **We intend**

to be in solidarity with the young, especially the most disadvantaged, providing them with the means of achieving their full potential through education, life-building support and employment opportunities where their needs and rights are respected.

Marist Solidarity Cambodia is an integral part of the mission of the Marist Brothers.

In cooperation with the Royal Government of Cambodia, MSC seeks to engage in humanitarian activities for social and educational development and public benefit, especially but not exclusively for young people with disabilities. In putting these activities into practice MSC seeks to promote Marist values of equality, dignity and social justice for all.

## **LOGO - THREE VIOLETS**

Violets are no less beautiful for being small and easily overlooked. St Marcellin Champagnat is said to have used the violet to illustrate the importance of simple virtues, among them courtesy and mutual respect, patience and hospitality, generosity and friendliness. At MSC we would have these and other similar qualities typify the way we live and work together and the way we relate to others.

## **AID and DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

In fulfilling its Mission, Marist Solidarity Cambodia aims to

1. Empower those we serve to take their own path to development.
2. Build creative and trusting relationships with local community groups and involve them in our projects and activities.
3. Build sustainability into our projects and programs by enhancing local capacity.
4. Respect and foster internationally recognised standards of human rights.
5. Provide service regardless of race, creed, colour, gender or disability.
6. Frame our programs and projects within the history and culture of the people we serve.
7. Evidence accountability and transparency in financial management.
8. Evidence respect for and proper stewardship of the earth's resources.

## ***MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR***

At the time of revising this Information Booklet, Marist Solidarity Cambodia is engaged with more than 560 young Cambodians with physical disabilities, many of them resident in Takhmao and Phnom Penh, the majority of them scattered throughout Cambodia's provinces.

The work that began not so very long ago in 1998, with just over 40 students in a rented house in Phnom Penh, there to complete their elementary schooling, has steadily broadened to take in the range of activities you find summarised here. Our objective hasn't altered.

Given the obstacles these young people face - poverty in their families, their disabilities, a society that expects them to manage as do able-bodied people making no special provision for them, with some help from us they do remarkably well.

That commitment has lead us into education at every level; skills training, some of it provided by partners; our own craft production and marketing program; ventures into farming; micro credit aimed at assisting the establishing of small businesses; job placement programs. Housed and supported at Takhmao are nearly 200 young people: hostel arrangements make it possible for them to attend school and training courses.

All of this tells of the regard we have for these young people and of our hopes for them. Among them, plenty of evidence of the potential they have to find their way in life confidently and purposefully.

Ours is privileged work and daily we learn much from our students. One cannot be among them and not be challenged to reflect on those human qualities that distinguish the ordinary from the extraordinary.

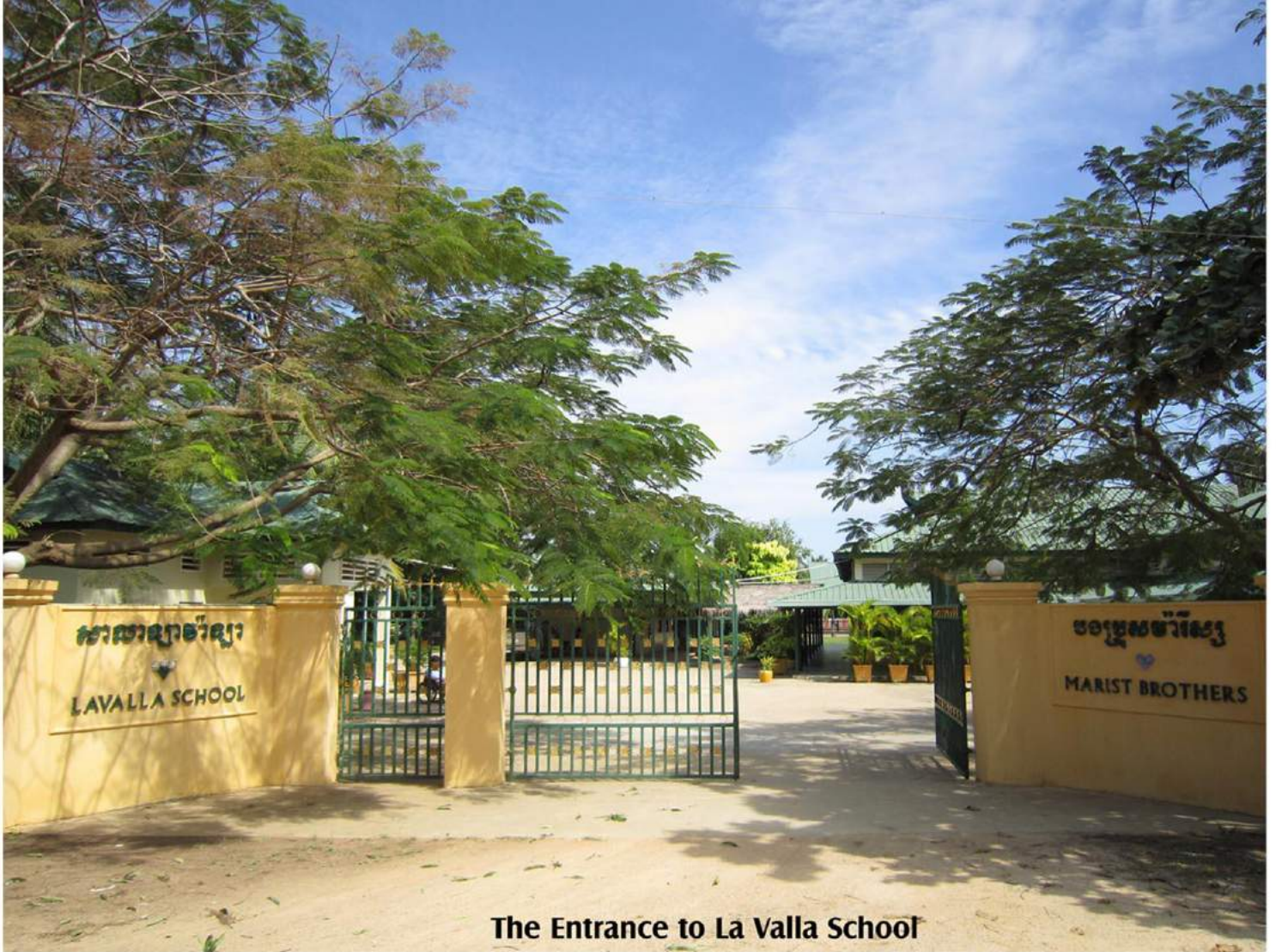
We thank you for your interest and support.

Nimul Ouch

## ***OUR PROJECTS***

***LaValla School for Children and Young People  
with Physical Disabilities***





**The Entrance to La Valla School**



***Some of our children in grade 1***





LaValla School is the only government approved school in Cambodia providing a full primary education for children and young people with physical disabilities. It is a residential program: most of the one hundred students normally enrolled live-in and its educational program is accelerated so that the six levels of elementary schooling required in Cambodia are completed in three years.



***Students at the computer class***





**La Valla Students**



**Graduating Class 6, 2011**



## ***Villa Maria Hostel for High School Students***





At Villa Maria, about 14k from Phnom Penh and in rented houses nearby, young people with physical disabilities live throughout the school year, attending high school in Takhmao or training programs. Many but not all of the students are graduates from LaValla. Their home circumstances make it too difficult or impossible to attend their local high schools.

This program provides accommodation and meals, medical care and physical rehabilitation, transport to and from school, school uniforms and equipment. Tuition in computing and English are available on site at Villa Maria.

Villa Maria aspires to be a home away from home: there is a consistent emphasis on creating a family atmosphere and fostering confidence and self reliance among all its residential students.



*The Students at Training Basic Computer at Villa Maria*



## ***Schooling Assistance Program***

With funds provided by the Netherlands based Stichting Liliane Fonds we are able to assist young people with disabilities continue their schooling. The grants help these young people attend primary, junior high and high school with money for tuition, transport, food and where necessary, living costs.

The German organization Misereor provides funds to help young people with disabilities continue their tertiary education. Those receiving this support live together in Phnom Penh where they are attending various universities. Each of them is committed to some voluntary work with our organization once they have finished their respective courses.



***Boarding students in Villa Maria***



## ***Vocational Training and Employment Guidance***

Marist Solidarity Cambodia provides young people with disabilities the opportunity to gain vocational training and work experience. Often this is made available through other service providers, the Jesuit Training Centre at Banteay Preap for example. MSC assumes responsibility for guiding these young people through their training and, thanks to the generosity of our donors, provides a number of them with small loans, sometimes grants to help them establish their own businesses.





## ***The Farms***

MSC operates two farms in rural areas: in Chhouk, Kampot and in Sa'ang, Kandal. On these sites youth with disabilities have the opportunity to acquire skills for managing a farm and cultivating crops for food and for sale. Crops of corn, beans and peanuts have been successfully harvested while training in pig raising is available. As well as offering training, MSC aims to develop these and other activities commercially, generating funds for the work of the organization.





## ***Special Care***

The farm at Kampot is the site for a day care centre for children with disabilities notable among them children with cerebral palsy. Through this centre the services of a physiotherapist are made available as is a monthly medical clinic for poor people who have difficulty accessing medical help.



*Clinic day*



# Yodicraft & Socail business



## Recycled Rice Bags

How do you do your part to save the planet and help workers with disabilities in Cambodia?

You buy some of these eye-catching products, ethically produced from recycled rice bags.

**ORDER NOW**



Our various Yodibusinesses have three goals: to provide training and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities, to generate income with which to sustain these projects and to showcase the talents of the young people who contribute to these businesses.

## Handicrafts

Our handicraft is a source of pride for us. With skilled wood carvers and needle workers operating in workshops at Villa Maria we produce a range of items from beautiful wooden statues to smart handbags and other items of fashion. We invite you to look at our Yodicraft website: **[www.yodicraft.com](http://www.yodicraft.com)**

These handicrafts are available from our shop at Villa Maria and from the Yodicraft shop at **#13, St 172 in Phnom Penh.**

Shopping online is available and we welcome orders from abroad.

## Other Businesses

In Takhmao we have shops for motorbike repairs, electronic repairs, mobile phone repairs and hairdressing. These are commercial and training sites.



# YodiBand

Yodiband is a modern music band of talented young people who happen to have some form of physical disability. We welcome opportunities to perform at events – weddings, parties, house warmings etc. Yodiband is one of our businesses.

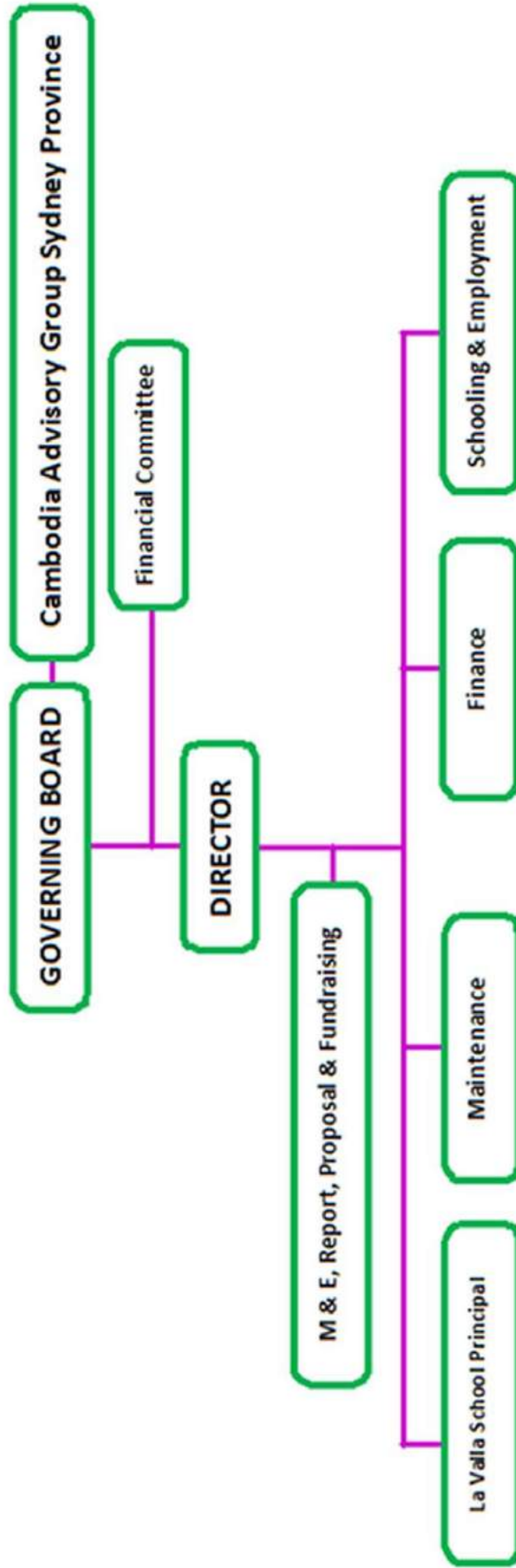
We welcome enquiries: Tel. 855 12 324 548 or visit [www.yodifree.org](http://www.yodifree.org)



*Music Class*



# Organisational Chart





## **CONCLUSION**

Our work with children and young people with physical disabilities is now well into its fifteenth year. We have reason to be pleased with what we've accomplished. Yet we are reminded often of the privilege it is to be among such young people. Life has presented each of them with an extra challenge and so much depends on how they choose to meet that challenge. Our experience is that most do so gamely, cheerfully, purposefully: their example inspires the rest of us.

Like caring people anywhere we want to make a difference in the lives of young people faced with the disadvantage that comes with physical disability. For us that widely shared compassion is nuanced by the Gospel's imperative to

feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty,  
clothe the naked, shelter the homeless,  
visit the sick, visit those in prison, bury the dead.

While Gospel values are the foundation of our enterprises in Cambodia we are animated by the example of St Marcellin Champagnat, the Founder of the Marist Brothers. His compassion and zeal enliven our Marist work in Cambodia today, a work that is always done, "In the name of Mary".





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LaValla School



**Yodiffee  
Cambodia**

