

Inclusive education in Cambodia

Kidshelp



Location

Phnom Penh, Cambodia



Target group

School children under 18,
teachers, families and
student volunteers



Budget

\$4,800 (2024)
\$3,200 (2025)



SDGs

SDG 3 (target 3.8),
SDG 5 (target 5.1)

Synopsis

Strengthen knowledge and daily practices in oral hygiene and patient safety, laying the foundation for healthier lifelong behaviors through school-based education and community engagement.

Program description

Malnutrition remains a significant health concern in Cambodia, affecting 32% of school children, with 10% underweight. In addition, 45% of children experience untreated dental cavities, often linked to high sugar consumption and poor hygiene practices. The partnership with Kidshelp Cambodia addresses these interconnected challenges through school-based education programs that promote oral health, hygiene and patient safety awareness.

By delivering engaging learning sessions, distributing essential supplies, and reinforcing healthy habits through teachers and families, the partnership aims to embed practical health knowledge early in life, where it can have the greatest long-term impact.

Inclusive Education in Cambodia builds off a successful 2024 pilot which equipped female Cambodian nursing students with comprehensive training in diabetes management through ClinicalKey, Elsevier's evidence-based health support platform. With the guidance of Natasha Gulati, Elsevier's Customer Success Team Manager, the students conducted diabetes screening drives in low resource settings, identifying patients, and providing personalized coaching on lifestyle and medication management. Through this work, they were able to demonstrate the transformative power of education and support, and illustrate how informed individuals can take proactive steps toward better health outcomes.



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Goals

- Improve children's knowledge and daily practices related to oral hygiene and handwashing.
- Increase awareness of patient safety concepts through child-friendly educational materials.
- Reach at least 50 students and their families with positive feedback from adults through upcoming nutrition education activities.
- Build local capacity by engaging teachers and student volunteers in sustained health promotion efforts.

Activities and milestones

- Delivered oral health education sessions, including demonstrations of proper brushing techniques and distribution of toothbrushes and toothpaste.
- Reinforced oral hygiene practices through ongoing teacher monitoring and classroom follow-up.
- Printed and distributed Doctor Safety books in English and Khmer to students, teachers and families.
- Organized a formal storytelling day in September 2025, combining book readings with practical demonstrations of proper handwashing. Classroom sessions and hygiene demonstrations were recorded to support continued learning.

Looking ahead

- Despite challenges, including language barriers, remote coordination across countries, and delivery in rural settings, the team remains committed to strengthening local capacity and embedding sustainable health behaviors among children and families.
- Natasha Gulati was able to form a project team for Nutrition Education, with a formal launch planned for the first half of 2026 – expanding the program's focus to address dietary habits and long-term health outcomes.

