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## Lotus Outreach: Featured (2010), Sustained (2012-2014)

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DFW will continue the support of Lotus' program that provides trauma counseling and reintegration assistance to victims of human trafficking, rape and domestic violence residing at a safe-shelter in the border region of Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia—a known hotspot for trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence.

*Lotus Outreach was supported by Dining for Women as a Featured Program in April 2011, and received \$39,761.*

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### 2011 Featured Grant Info

**Project Title:** Lotus Outreach

**Location:** Cambodia

**Grant Amount:** \$39,761

**Grantee Website:** [www.lotusoutreach.org](http://www.lotusoutreach.org)

**Areas of Impact:** Economic Sustainability, Safety and Security

**Mission of Lotus Outreach: Featured (2010), Sustained (2012-2014)**

Lotus Outreach is dedicated to ensuring the education, health and safety of vulnerable women and children in the developing world.

**Summary**

DFW's donations will provide trauma counseling and reintegration assistance to victims of human trafficking, rape and domestic violence residing at a safe-shelter in the border region of Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia—a known hotspot for trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence.

Lotus Outreach is requesting \$36,038.22 to support the counseling and reintegration components of an aftercare program for victims of human trafficking, rape and domestic violence. Dining for Women's donations will help fund the salaries of shelter-based counselors and social workers, travel and incidentals for repatriated victims, local women's support groups, and financial assistance and small business grants for reintegrated victims.



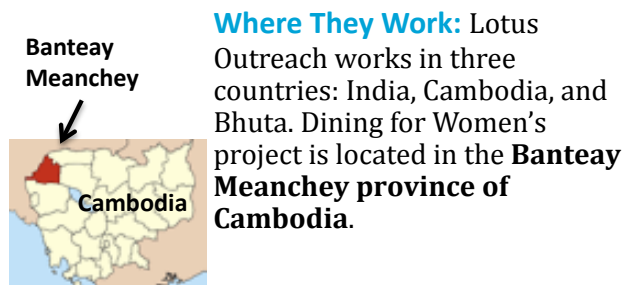
**Program:** Lotus Outreach International

**Website:** <http://www.lotusoutreach.org>

**Mission:** Lotus Outreach International is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the education, health and safety of at-risk women and children in the third world. Lotus Outreach achieves its mission by supporting the development of effective grassroots projects in vulnerable communities.

**History of the Organization:** Lotus Outreach began in 1993 as a secular charity in Bir, Northern India. Chairman and founder, Khyentse Norbu, formed White Lotus Children's Program providing educational sponsorships for Tibetan refugee families. He then established additional programs in other parts of India including the first mobile health and educational van in Delhi to help impoverished street children.

**In 2002, White Lotus was incorporated in the United States. In 2003, the name was changed to Lotus Outreach.** The organization then expanded the reach of programs as well as the scope of the work. Lotus Outreach was incorporated in California with the objective of creating an American center of infrastructure and program support. International supporters of Lotus Outreach concurrently established their own support networks and became Lotus Outreach's global affiliates.



**Where They Work:** Lotus Outreach works in three countries: India, Cambodia, and Bhuta. Dining for Women's project is located in the **Banteay Meanchey province of Cambodia.**



**About the Region:** Cambodia is located in Southeastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, between Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. The country is slightly smaller than Oklahoma. The prevailing religion of Cambodia is Buddhism. The literacy rate is higher for males (84.7%) than for females (64.1%).



The Cambodian government is working with bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank, to address the country's many pressing needs. **More than 50% of the population is less than 25 years old.** The population lacks education and productive skills, particularly in the poverty-ridden countryside, which suffers from an almost total lack of basic infrastructure.

In Cambodia, an old adage enjoys popular currency today: "**Women are like cloth and men are like gold,**" claiming that once cloth is soiled, it ought to be thrown away for it cannot be cleaned.



This chauvinistic attitude still reigns, hovering oppressively over the hopes and dreams of an entire nation's female population. Domestic violence is perhaps the most common consequence of this toxic ideology, afflicting approximately one in four women—the vast majority of whom have nowhere to turn.

### History of the region: Cambodia: A Nation in Ruins

**Most Cambodians consider themselves to be Khmers, descendants of the Angkor Empire that extended over much of Southeast Asia and reached its zenith between the 10th and 13th centuries.** Attacks by the Thai and Cham (from present-day Vietnam) weakened the empire, ushering in a long period of decline. The king placed the country under French protection in 1863 and it became part of French Indochina in 1887. **Cambodia gained full independence from France in 1953.**

The Kingdom of Cambodia suffered one of the 20th century's most devastating assaults on humanity in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, launched a victorious assault on the Khmer Republic. Thousands died due to starvation and disease.

**In their quest for a new national order, the Khmer Rouge conducted deadly purges to eliminate all remnants of "old society"—from Buddhist monks to doctors to the children of former government officials.** Executions were frequently arbitrary—people with eyeglasses or larger stomachs were targeted for their perceived connections to the intellectual class or the former government. **By the Khmer Rouge's fall in 1979, it is estimated that as many as 3 million people—over 1/3 of the entire population—died from starvation, disease, overwork or summary execution.**



A Cambodian girl looks at skulls on display at the Choeung Ek killing fields memorial in Phnom Penh. Hundreds of survivors of the brutal Khmer Rouge gathered in 2009 at Cambodia's notorious killing fields. Photo credit: Tang Chhin Sothy / AFP / Getty Images

### The Tragic Legacy of the Khmer Rouge

- **Cambodia is among the poorest countries in the world.**
- The Khmer Rouge's eradication of the intellectual class still reverberates today, evidenced by the fact that **only 4% of the labor force is educated beyond high school.**
- Cambodia's civil conflict is directly linked to the **perpetuation of poverty** in the region, having devastated the country's traditional support system and human resources.
- Today, **34 percent of the Cambodian population lives on less than \$1 per day**—placing over 1/3 of the population below the international poverty line.
- With a per capita income of only \$571, Cambodia ranks 131 of 177 in the Human Development Report.

**Banteay Meanchey is a hub for human trafficking.** When the Khmer Rouge forces fled Phnom Penh in 1979 they relocated to the north of Cambodia, including the province of Banteay Meanchey on the border with Thailand. Heavy fighting led to widespread displacement, destroying village life. To this day, large portions of the province remain covered with land mines, further compounding the dangers facing people living in this region. **Proximity to the Thai border, widespread poverty and a lack of social cohesion have created a perilous situation for Banteay Meanchey's female population. Thailand's prolific sex trade has rendered the province a hotspot for human trafficking, with children being particularly vulnerable.**



Photo Credit: Human Rights Watch

**Gender-based violence is rampant in Cambodia, where women are expected to remain chaste until marriage and are generally held in lower regard than men.**

Widespread sex trafficking and rape present Cambodian women with a painful irony: in addition to the trauma of sexual assault and abuse, victims are often blamed for what has happened to them.

Ostracized and shouldering a

burden of guilt for having shamed their families, many girls have no one to turn to. Unsurprisingly, in this environment, **most sex crimes go unreported**. When they are reported, a typical solution for the family of an unchaste daughter is to seek retribution from her assailant. Local custom calls for the perpetrator to pay compensation when charges are brought against him. Yet rather than treating victims with tenderness or care, in some cases the attacker’s marriage to the “tainted” daughter is demanded - and delivered.

**The Project: Aftercare for Victims of Human Trafficking, Rape and Domestic Violence**

Lotus Outreach is requesting a grant of **\$36,038.22** to support the counseling and reintegration components of an aftercare program for victims of human trafficking, rape and domestic violence.

**Dining for Women's donations will fund the salaries of two shelter-based counselors and two social workers, travel and incidentals for repatriated victims, the cost of establishing five local women’s support groups, and financial assistance and small business grants for approximately 70 reintegrated victims.**



These three young women used their business development fund to start a print and stationary service. Photo provided by Lotus International.

Lotus Outreach’s **Consoling Through Counseling (CTC)** and Reintegration program—delivered in partnership with their local partner, the **Cambodian Women’s Crisis Center (CWCC)**, is designed to provide women who are victims of violence a safe haven, physical and emotional protection, support, and sustenance so these victims can heal and recover. At the shelter in Sisophon, Banteay Meanchey, patients are welcome to stay for up to one year, during which time they have access to individual and group counseling, literacy courses, vocational training, life skills classes, legal services and reintegration assistance.

The comprehensive aftercare program places participants at the fore of the decision-making process from the time of their intake through reintegration.

Women participating in the aftercare program choose

when and what type of information to share with the counselors, what sort of skills training to undertake and collaborate with their social worker to develop a business plan.

**“Nobody Would Dare Rape the Rich”**

**A 2010 report by Amnesty International (AI) contends that rape is on the rise in Cambodia, with poverty increasing a girl’s risk.** Not only do the poor lack the knowledge and power to defend themselves, but inadequate support and assistance increase their odds of re-traumatization.

Most rape victims interviewed by AI described their attackers as economically better off. The Secretary General of the Cambodian National Council for Women stated in no uncertain terms: “Nobody would dare rape the rich.”



**Project Budget: Trauma Counseling and Reintegration Assistance for Shelter-Based Victims of Human Trafficking, Rape and Domestic Violence**

**Sisophon, Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia**

**2011 Budget**

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Reintegration staff, Social Workers, Agricultural Trainer, Shelter Nurse, Children's Caretaker, Severance Pay Required by Cambodian Labor Law, Health Benefits	
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>17,995.65</b>

**Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS)**

Start-up Financial Support for Reintegrated Victims, Small Business Grants to Reintegrated Victims, Establishing Victim Support Groups, Materials for Agricultural Training, Travel and Incidentals for Agricultural Trainer to provide ongoing coaching and mentoring, Travel and Incidentals for Reintegrated Victims, Social Workers to Accompany Repatriated Victims, Social Workers to Follow-up with Victims, Travel and Incidentals for Counselors to Accompany Victims to Legal Proceedings and Teaching Aids (Crayons, Books, Toys, etc.), Kleenex and Drinking Water for Counseling Sessions

<b>Total OTPS:</b>	<b>14,255.00</b>
Communications, Rent, Utilities: Cambodian Women's Crisis Center	3,225.07
<b>Program Total:</b>	<b>35,475.72</b>
Dining for Women DVDs (\$1.50 * 200)	337.50
Shipping Materials and Postage (\$4.50 * 200)	225
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$36,038.22</b>

Dining for Women may raise more than \$36,038.22. If so, any donations above that amount will help fund the following project:

**Requested Use of Excess Funds: Safe Migration and Reduction of Trafficking (SMART)**

In keeping with its mission to prevent human trafficking and provide early intervention services, Lotus Outreach operates the Safe Migration and Reduction of Trafficking (SMART) program as a complement to the Counseling and Reintegration project near the Thai-Cambodian border. **Lotus Outreach would like to request that additional funds raised by DFW go toward SMART, our comprehensive human trafficking awareness project** that incorporates mobile education/advocacy and victim referral services; training of local governance on trafficking laws and victim intervention; distributing information on safe migration to high risk groups at border-crossing points; peer educator training and capacity building; and installation and staffing of a counter-trafficking kiosk in Poipet.

Rental fee for Border Information Kiosk, Border Information Kiosk Staff, SMART Program Officer

**Total:** **\$8,070.00**

**How Lotus International Measures Success:**

**Database:** Counselors record a range of emotional indicators for each patient. The initial assessment serves as a baseline for measuring relative changes in the patient's condition throughout her stay. The daily reports are generally evaluated once a month, when treatment plans are subject to review and modification.

**Full psychological profiles:** performed after six months, at which point patients are considered for reintegration.

**Individual Strategies:** Before she leaves, a patient is assisted with creating a strategy for a safe, healthy lifestyle once back in society.

**Statistics software:** Demographic indicators are stored for monitoring over the long term. The intention is to uncover patterns in regards to primary data such as family, age, and place of origin that will enable Lotus Outreach and CWCC to better understand the needs of patients and signal areas with high rates of abuse.

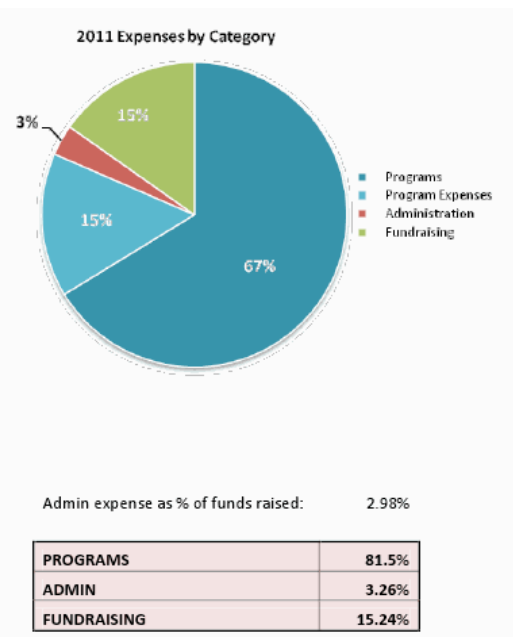
Detailed metrics on reintegrated women—including employment status and income—are reported on an ongoing basis along with information on the school attendance of reintegrated children.

**Home Visits:** Following reintegration, staff from the Ministry will visit victims every month and report their status back to CWCC and Lotus Outreach.

**Voices:** Concrete results in qualitative form come from women who have recovered the will to thrive amidst the fallout of cruelty and neglect, and share their stories with Lotus International.

**Financial Profile:**

Lotus International’s 2011 Operating Budget projects spending 81.5% on programs, 3.26% on administration and 15.24% on fundraising.



**The objectives of Lotus International’s reintegration project are threefold:**

- 1. Pair victims with a social worker** who will assist them in finding a place to live and securing employment or starting a small business, utilizing the job skills acquired while at the shelter. For victims of trafficking, the project will cover the costs of repatriation. A social worker will accompany girls to their home villages, staying several days in order to facilitate the highly emotional process of reuniting them with their families.
- 2. Provide financial assistance to cover food and housing** for the first few months outside the shelter. **In certain cases, the project will provide grants of up to \$500 to help victims start a small business.** Victims applying for a small business grant will work closely with their social worker to develop a business plan and complete a grant application, which is reviewed by the provincial grants committee. The social worker accompanies new grantees to their village to purchase necessary provisions and help them get set up.
- 3. Establish local women’s support groups for reintegrated victims and other vulnerable women and girls** in the community so they can share their challenges, frustrations, problems and concerns, giving them a continued emotional support-base and source of encouragement once they leave the shelter.

**Sources:**

Lotus Outreach International <http://www.lotusoutreach.org>  
<http://dartcenter.org/content/reckoning-with-khmer-rouge>  
 CIA World Fact Book Cambodia <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>  
 Human Rights Watch: “Off the Streets: Arbitrary Detention and Other Abuses Against Sex Workers in Cambodia.”

