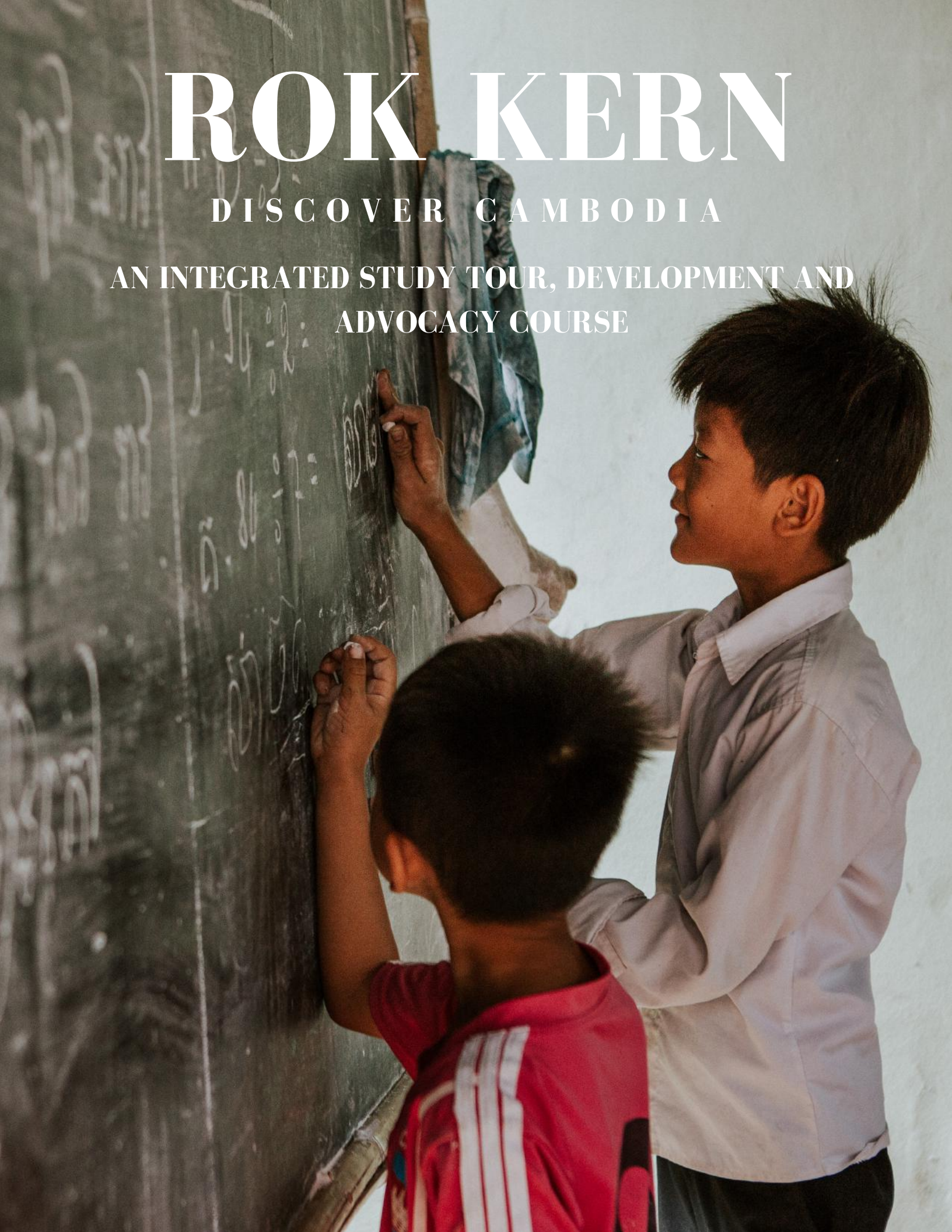


ROK KERN

DISCOVER CAMBODIA

AN INTEGRATED STUDY TOUR, DEVELOPMENT AND
ADVOCACY COURSE





Rok Kern is a two-part project run by Children in Families for schools that are interested in:

- helping Cambodian orphans and vulnerable children, without participating in voluntourism or supporting models that harm children
- helping their students explore issues of charity, social justice and poverty
- exposing students to other places and cultures in order to better understand their own place in the world

This project is particularly designed for schools that have previously engaged in volunteer tourism trips, but now desire to transition to a more ethical exposure trip format, in line with the growing awareness of the dangers associated with voluntourism and visiting orphanages.

Of course, it is equally open to schools that would like to begin exploring issues of poverty, development, justice and service through an overseas trip for the first time!

"The day we spent with [Rok Kern] was very impacting for the staff and students alike and further consolidated their awareness of factors around orphanage tourism... great hearing it from people on the ground in authentic ways... Sensational!"
- Grant, Team leader



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CHILDREN IN FAMILIES ...where they belong

Who is Children in Families?

Children in Families (CIF) is a local Cambodian NGO. It has been registered with the Ministry of the Interior since 2009 and is dedicated to providing high-quality family-based care for orphans and vulnerable children in Cambodia. CIF advocates locally and globally for children to be raised in loving families. At CIF, we provide three streams of family care programming: short-term Emergency Care, Kinship Care, and medium and long-term Foster Care. We also provide specific care to children with disabilities and chronic illness through our ABLE project, and engage with the wider community through our Outreach and OSCAR projects. For more information go to <https://www.childreinfamilies.org>

Why did Rok Kern begin?

Cambodian government studies show that over 16,000 Cambodian children are growing up in over 400 orphanages.

Despite the fact that starting new orphanages is illegal, and that the number of actual orphans is decreasing, new orphanages continue to be opened. They are funded through the generosity of people in the West, who are often looking for projects that they can support when they come to visit on short-term trips. It is thought that up to 15% of schools in some states of Australia either visit or financially support orphanages.

However, research shows that short-term trips to orphanages increase the children's vulnerability by increasing the number of broken attachments they experience and putting them at risk of abuse from visitors and orphanage staff.



As a Christian NGO, Children in Families believes that God is calling us to care for orphans and widows. We believe that Australian students, churches and the wider community have a crucial role to play in advocating for vulnerable children in the developing world and in supporting organisations that care for them.

We also believe that short-term trips conducted with a desire to learn from Cambodian people and to understand the complexities of poverty, development, aid, mission and social justice can play an important part of a young (and not so young) person discovering how they can make a difference in the world. We believe that short-term trips do not have to be part of the problem of orphan care in Cambodia but can be a crucial part in building a voice for change, with groups engaging in advocacy, action, sharing and reflection upon their return home.

Through this, participants can make a sustainable, harm-free difference, far greater than that made by volunteering for a short time overseas and returning without reflecting on how these lessons engage life at home.

We are seeking a generation that can use their privilege, knowledge, passion and experience to support others in ways that do no harm.



What Does This Project Offer?

This project has two main parts:

- a twelve day study tour in Cambodia
- pre-trip and post-trip coursework to integrate lessons learned into participants' lives and their school community

The tour aims to educate staff and students about Cambodia, its culture and history, and some of the work that is being done to build a better future. Groups will visit important cultural sites, learn some of the language, and attend unique workshops with NGOs that provide family-based care or assist with reintegrating children from orphanages.

Groups will take part in orientation sessions run by CIF prior to leaving Australia. This will brief participants on topics such as the problematic nature of voluntourism and orphanage-based care; social justice and charity; healthy approaches to development; how to communicate ethically about your overseas trip; and an introduction to Cambodian culture.

Students will have the opportunity to debrief and reflect on what they have learned during the trip through journals and debriefing sessions, and will be encouraged to think about how to put these lessons in to practice. Upon their return to Australia, they will also participate in debriefing exercises and advocacy projects, to help them process and share the experience, using it as a catalyst to make a lasting impact for both themselves and Cambodia.



Rok Kern staff are also available to schools to assist them in making these lessons a wider part of their charity or service programs. This can be achieved through curriculum integration across multiple subjects, helping staff and students recognise how privilege, donor attitudes, and social justice issues are all intertwined. Rok Kern staff can support schools to identify areas of curriculum that could include units about Cambodia or development, and then help identify resources or approaches for schools to use.

What This Project is Not

The Rok Kern project exists to educate Westerners about Cambodia, mission and development. One of the guiding questions for this project is *“Would an Australian foster care system or school allow a group of foreign students to do the activity that we are wanting to do?”*

We ask schools to come with the humility to learn from the people of Cambodia about their context. Schools participating in Rok Kern will not visit vulnerable families or groups of vulnerable children, or participate in activities that locals could do for themselves (e.g building projects). The “doing” involved in Rok Kern is listening, learning and using your voice to share what you learn and magnify the voices of those who we often ignore, particularly through advocacy upon returning home.



What are the Learning Outcomes?

By taking part in the Rok Kern project, your school will be part of changing the dialogue and practice of what it means to do effective development. Your staff and students will learn to:

- Recognise the importance of safeguarding children when working in vulnerable communities
- Understand the benefits of family-based care, the harms of orphanage-based care and voluntourism, and the complexities of reintegrating children from institutions into families
- Understand the value of local solutions, local worth and the dignity of local people
- See the current situation in Cambodia as part of the larger story of Cambodia's history and culture
- Understand the crucial role of outsiders in development and how they can best support people in developing countries to determine their own agendas and development
- Put this in to practice through education, advocacy, being a good donor and volunteering responsibly
- Recognise how their own skills and passions interact with the needs of others
- Recognise do-no-harm approaches to development work and mission, and articulate the complexities of various methods of development and mission
- Identify how Australia and Cambodia are linked socially, culturally and economically

The Itinerary

The trip to Cambodia includes:

- Language lessons
- Visits to places with significant cultural and historical value, and other activities including:
 - a cultural learning experience
 - a historical tour
 - the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the Killing Fields
 - the Royal Palace
 - the Angkor Wat complex
 - a cooking class
 - an art gallery
 - Phare, a Cambodia acrobatic circus
 - various markets

These cultural experiences provide some of the context that gives rise to the complexities of social justice issues in Cambodia. They also help debunk the "me" centered approach to development by celebrating the culture of Cambodia, the skills of the Cambodian people and the way that Cambodian society has changed over time.

Groups will also spend time with 5 organisations that work with Cambodian families, learning about:

- the challenges of caring for vulnerable children in Cambodia and what the Cambodian government and NGOs are doing to care for them
- how care for vulnerable children is related to other areas of development, such as health, education and business
- the complexities of working with a society rebuilding after civil war with high levels of poverty and inequality
- how different skills and interests can be used to make a difference
- how to reflect on the experience of the trip and how to participate in advocacy projects upon return to Australia

Note: The cultural part of the trip can be used to explore the key concepts of the Australian National Curriculum's cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.





What Does Our Package Include?

By being part of this project your school will benefit by:

- Knowing that the organisations you are visiting are legally registered, financially transparent, child-safe organisations. They are predominantly Cambodian led and committed to empowering Khmer people to make long-term, sustainable change in their country.
- Receiving assistance through the application process, a pre-departure checklist, accommodation recommendations, and answers to common FAQs about health care and travel to Cambodia. We have created guidelines for the group selection process to help you identify which students and families are the best match for this project.
- Receiving orientation resources prior to leaving Australia to help you prepare your students well and help them understand the context they are coming into. This will involve lesson plans and interactive materials for 7 pre-departure sessions on various topics, some of which will be run by Rok Kern staff, with others being run by the school group leaders.
- Receiving debriefing resources for use on the trip and upon return, including an individual reflective workbook to be completed while in Cambodia and group discussion questions, to maximise the trip's long-term impact on the students and Cambodia.
- Having a planned itinerary with local or expat staff accompanying you for much of your travels, and knowing that the trip will be conducted in a culturally informed and sensitive manner.
- Receiving support for advocacy and fundraising projects upon return to Australia.
- Having opportunities to work with Rok Kern to integrate the lessons from the trip into your charity programs and the school's curriculum, focusing on the learning outcomes you are aiming for under the Australian National Curriculum's cross-curriculum priorities of *Engaging with Asia* and *Sustainability*. This ensures that the benefits from this partnership are not just experienced by those who attend the trip.
- Receiving support from and being able to ask questions of long-term cross-cultural workers living in Cambodia.

What are the Costs?

Apart from the school group trips, CIF also offers Discover trips at set dates each year for school leadership to explore how this project could work for their school. The Discover trip includes the whole project and discussion about how it can be tailored to the curriculum needs of your school.

School Group packages are for groups of up to fifteen Year 11 and 12 students and their supervising teachers. Packages include visas into Cambodia, attraction entrance fees, language lessons, speaker fees, CIF staff support, team t-shirts, meals, accommodation and all in-country transport (including travel to Siem Reap). The cost of the package depends on team size, how much staff support you require and in which locations.

These costs do not include flights, travel insurance, passport and vaccination costs, spending money or any emergency costs. Costs may be subject to change.

Type of trip	Number of CIF staff accompanying the tour	Cost per person (staff and students) in US\$	
		Minimum #	Maximum #*
Discover trip for Staff	2 staff for Phnom Penh and Siem Reap	1343	1266
12 day School trip	2 staff for Phnom Penh and Siem Reap	1343	1266
12 day School trip	1 staff for Phnom Penh and Siem Reap	1296	1240
7 days in Phnom Penh + resources for Siem Reap	2 staff members Phnom Penh only	1252	1214
7 days in Phnom Penh + resources for Siem Reap	1 staff member Phnom Penh only	1248	1211

* The minimum group size is 10 (8 students and 2 teachers) and the maximum group size is 18 (15 students and 3 teachers). Contact us for costs for groups of 11-17 people.

For schools that are interested in the educational tools but not the Cambodia tour, our resource pack is available for a fee. Please contact our Rok Kern team for more information.

What is the School Commitment?

We are seeking to partner with schools that want to:

- Have a learning approach to short-term trips
- Use the reflections, tools, itinerary and guidelines provided for their trip
- See this as part of a wider community effort to strengthen families in Cambodia
- Commit to the policies and procedures set out by CIF
- Participate in advocacy and fundraising on return
- Implement this into a wider learning experience beyond the in-country trip

What is the application process?

- Schools that are interested in the full project are encouraged to make a time to talk with our Rok Kern staff. They will discuss your aims, options and scheduling, and talk to you in more detail about what our project entails and requires. After this, they can send you a partnership form. Email rokkern@childreninfamilies.org to begin this process.
- For the Discover trips, where staff can experience the project before doing it with their students, successful applicants will be required to travel to Cambodia on the dates provided, participate in all planned activities and submit to the leadership of CIF staff. 10-15 hours of orientation and another 5 hours of debriefing are also part of this commitment. This will be predominately done as group work online. If your school would like to take part in this, please email rokkern@childreninfamilies.org

"Rok Kern was extremely relevant and well paced for our students. It challenged notions of appeasing the conscience of someone trying to help, with the realities of how to actually help."

-Chris, Teacher

Connect with us:

Email: rokkern@childreninfamilies.org

Skype: Rokkern Coordinator

Website: www.childreninfamilies.org/what-we-do/rok-kern/



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