



Australia Awards

Australia Awards in Cambodia Toward Gender Equality *Information for Women*



“Long-term awards in particular contribute strongly to women’s professional advancement. The opportunity to live and study in Australia for an extended period of time not only builds women’s technical skills and capabilities, but also develops personal skills and attributes critical to women exercising leadership” (Australia Awards Global Strategy)

Australia Awards Alumni, Miss Sann Socheata, Ms Kry Linna, Dr Hav Monirath, Ms Touch Sopharath, Ms Em Kagna and HE Ngjin Lina

Australia Awards recognize the important and valuable contribution made by Cambodian women to the development and leadership of community, civil society, non-government and government organisations. The Australian Government has a steadfast and ongoing commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment through its development Program.

A goal of the Australia Awards Cambodia gender strategy is to achieve at least fifty percent (50%) of Awards being offered to eligible, high quality women applicants each year. In order to achieve this we must rapidly increase the number of women who apply for an Australia Awards Scholarship and support provisional awardees during pre-departure training so they successfully progress to Australian Universities.

Australia Awards Scholarships are fully funded scholarship opportunities for Cambodians to study at Australian Universities. Australia Awards Scholarships are provided for study at Masters level and in exceptional cases PhD.

Our Women Awardees and Alumni

Our women awardees and alumni are from diverse backgrounds including:

- Provincial and remote rural areas, as well as regional cities and Phnom Penh
- Different social and economic backgrounds
- All ages and career stages
- A range of professional and academic backgrounds.

Since 1994 Australia Awards has supported over 200 Cambodian women to complete their post graduate studies at Australian Universities. All have since

returned to Cambodia where they are making a significant contribution in their professional field. They have studied in more than 100 different degrees including accounting and finance, aquaculture, banking, engineering, development studies, environmental management and policy, gender, health (including specialist health areas and public health), law, media, project management, public administration and policy, social work and taxation.

Benefits of an Australia Awards Scholarship to Women and Their Families

An Australia Awards Scholarship will provide you with an opportunity to:

- Acquire a qualification that will equip you with skills, knowledge, capabilities in your technical field
- Develop lasting professional and personal connections with Australian and other international students
- Build economic prosperity of yourself and your family through career advancement on return to Cambodia
- Develop a range of soft skills and attributes that will enhance your future potential as a leader in your sector
- Realize your full potential

In addition, there is an opportunity for your spouse and children to work, live and attend childcare or school during your Award.

“Gender equality is an issue of international social and economic importance. As leaders and employers, we know there is much more we can do to make a difference.” **Founding Male Champions of Change**

Achieving Equality Background

In 2016, the Australia Awards office in Cambodia received 511 applications (183 women and 328 men). The percentage of women applicants has been increasing at a rate of less than 1 percent each year. Over a four-year period 2013 to 2016 on average 40 percent of Australia Awards Scholarships were granted to women and 60 percent to men.

Program data indicates that women who do apply compete very favorably alongside male applicants at both the application assessment and interview selection stages (in some years even outperforming the men).

In late 2016 the Australia Awards office in Cambodia undertook consultation and research to determine the reasons why the percentage of women applying is considerably less than the percentage of men and what strategies the program might implement to achieve equity goals. An Equity Pathway Program was developed in 2013 to ensure women can compete for an Award on an equal basis and has now been further strengthened.

The Barriers Women Face and the Enabling Factors that can Improve Outcomes

It is recognized that women across the world experience a range of barriers to equal participation in community, education and work.

The Australia Awards office in Cambodia recognizes there are a range of factors affecting women's choices and capacity to:

- Be eligible to apply for an Australia Awards Scholarship
- Apply for and win a provisional Australia Awards Scholarship
- Progress successfully through pre-departure training and become an Awardee at an Australian University

If women, their champions, and the Australia Awards Scholarship program are to achieve gender equity then a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and enablers for women's equal participation need to be understood and acknowledged. The Australia Awards office in Cambodia's research and consultation indicate the most significant barriers (and enablers if addressed) for women in Cambodia generally fall into three main categories:

- Social and cultural norms
- Workplace structures and practices
- Professional and relationship networks

Social and cultural norms include:

- Expectations of how women behave and what they do
- Tensions between the competing demands and expectations of work, family and parenting
- Women, their families and communities prioritize the needs and aspirations of the family, sons, brothers and husbands over personal, educational and professional ambitions of girls and women. Consequently this can create lower ambitions and motivation by girls and women themselves.
- Less women complete higher education due to these norms
- Women are generally employed (and seek employment) in a narrower range of fields and at lower levels of seniority.

Workplace structures and practices:

- Women have more limited number of work/employment opportunities (it is estimated that 30% of the workforce are women)
- Women occupy fewer leadership and professional positions, consequently there are fewer women role models in many workplaces
- Lower level support for women's higher education and women feel more vulnerable about their job security (so are less likely to undertake activities and actions that are not supported in their workplace)
- Women indicate they are actively discouraged – they are expected to have lower ambition and motivation toward a career, career advancement, education and leadership.

Professional relationships and networks include:

- Women have fewer opportunities due to gender barriers to participation that directly exclude women but not men (family responsibilities; topic, venue or timing excludes them; lack of/need for permission to attend)
- Fewer and less opportunities for establishing and maintaining networks and professional relationships amongst women and for career and educational advancement

Eligibility Requirements for an Australia Awards Scholarship

One of the more challenging eligibility requirements for women to even be considered for a Master's degree is English language proficiency of at least an IELTS score of 5.5 overall with no sub-band less than 5.0 (or equivalent).

For more information about the eligibility requirements please refer to www.australiaawardscambodia.org



Ms Aing Sophea, Australia Awards Alumni

Equity Pathway Program

The Australia Awards office in Cambodia provides support and encouragement and works long term to support individual women applicants prior to them applying for an Australia Awards Scholarship.

The Australia Awards office in Cambodia actively seeks women for placement in the Equity Pathway Program. There are two methods of recruitment:

- By invitation. This includes women who apply for an Australia Awards Scholarship and their written application is identified as assessed highly, but they lack the prerequisite English language levels.
- By targeting and identification. This includes women with high motivation, leadership, development and education capacity who meet most of the eligibility requirements, but with only intermediate level English skills (i.e. insufficient English language level to make an application). The Australia Awards office in Cambodia identifies these women through referral and attendance at Information Sessions.

Those accepted into the Equity Pathway Program are offered:

- Up to 24 months part-time English language training (including testing)
- Invitations to workshops to keep participants on track with their studies, scholarship application plans and for mutual support and learning opportunities (including soft skills training)
- Access to a network of informal mentors and encouragers who can share their experiences (successes and challenges) with Equity Pathway participants
- Contribution toward transport and/or accommodation for scholarship and equity related activities if necessary.

Equity Support to All Women Applicants

Each year women will be invited to attend information sessions specifically targeted at women considering applying for an Australia Awards Scholarship.

Formats for these information sessions include one on one, small group and large group. At these sessions, women will have the opportunity to:

- Understand the eligibility and selection criteria and application processes
- Explore the issues that uniquely affect women's decisions to apply for and accept an Award
- Understand the benefits of an Award to themselves, their family and their career
- Receive encouragement in addressing and understanding the barriers they face.

Women are strongly encouraged to attend these women specific information sessions.

Australia Awards Selection Criteria

Selection of awardees is highly competitive. Australia Awards Scholarships are awarded to the best and brightest applicants based on an assessment of their written applications and performance at interview. This ensures that awardees have the highest capability to successfully complete their studies in Australia and return to Cambodia to make an impact in their chosen field. Applicants are assessed against the following criteria:

- Academic competence;
- Potential outcome, including contribution to outcomes in Cambodia; and
- Professional and personal leadership attributes.

Contact us

The Australia Awards office in Cambodia are confident of the capabilities of women in meeting the criteria for Awards and strongly encourage women to contact the Australia Awards Office in Cambodia to discuss the Equity Pathway Program and any matters related to considering applying for an Award now or in the future.

info@australiaawardscambodia.org

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