



The tide has gone out and has left a million starfish stranded on the beach. They are slowly dying under the heat of the sun. A little girl is walking along this beautiful sandy beach. As she walks along, she picks up a starfish and throws it back into the sea. She then picks another one and another, throwing each into the sea. An old man watches her for a while then walks up to her and says “What are you doing little girl? There are millions of starfish out there dying. You cannot believe that you can make a difference”. The girl kneels down, picks up a starfish, throws it into the sea and says “I made a difference to that one”.

## Our History

The starfish story, adapted from *The Star Thrower*, by Loren Eiseley, encapsulates the core belief of The Indo-China Starfish Foundation (ISF) that each and every one of us can make a difference, one child at a time.

In 2005, ISF founder Peter Slater and a group of his friends, all of whom had worked and lived in Asia for a number of years, visited Cambodia. All were impacted by the beauty of the country and the warmth of its people. However, they found that the devastating effects of the Pol Pot, Khmer Rouge regime which caused the deaths of approximately 2 million Cambodians were still evident in the levels of poverty, the lack of infrastructure and access to education.

After numerous conversations with local people and visits to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and orphanages it was clear to the group that there was a both a need and an opportunity to make a lasting difference to the lives of many Cambodian children. ISF was formed, and the group became its first Trustees.

The Trustees quickly agreed that their focus would be centred around two core programmes, an education programme and a football coaching programme, as each could have a profound and significant impact.



## Overview

**We believe that every child, no matter where they were born, has the right to quality education, healthcare and sports and play. Our programmes are aimed at providing education, healthcare and sporting opportunities to disadvantaged children in Cambodia as well as support services to their families and wider communities.**

## Education Programme

The intended benefit of our Education Programme is to give each student the foundation of a quality education, improve their health and nutrition, build their confidence and give them the opportunity to aspire to a better life.

We currently offer:

- Catch-up Programme – a fast-track education programme for children who have never been to school or have dropped out to ‘catch up’ to the correct grade for their age and enter state school
- State school support – ongoing support to students (and their families) who are attending state school
- English classes
- ICT training
- Employment counselling, training and support
- Healthcare
- Nutrition
- Community Development

Our Education Programme utilises a community-based model, providing services to children and their parents. Engagement with parents is essential to ensure students are not institutionalised, isolated or removed from their families or wider communities. This provides opportunities to the whole family; empowering them to change their own circumstances. From the onset of a child's involvement with ISF, parents are involved in key decision-making and offered ongoing support from social care visits to food parcels to vocational training and more. Our goal is to support families in breaking out of the cycle of poverty rather than providing hand outs or creating dependency.

ISF has grown from providing basic education opportunities to 18 children in 2006 to almost 700 in 2018. Our plan is to take an additional 100 students into our Education Programme each year. Through the services provided to the families of the children ISF works with, almost 3,000 additional people are supported.



## Football Programme

Our Football Programme was created in response to the lack of access to sports and play for youth from poor communities at a local and national level. Today, we aim to increase access to sports, build life skills, and improve the quality of life for underprivileged youth in poor urban and rural communities across Cambodia.

The programme consists of almost 4,000 girls and boys, and youth of different abilities. This includes players who may be deaf and hearing-impaired, blind and visually impaired, wheelchair users, HIV positive players and others with intellectual and physical disabilities from local schools, charities and community groups.



To expand our reach and commitment to inclusivity, we built a dedicated sports ground which has allowed the expansion of the programme and increased access to sports for disadvantaged and disabled youth.

Our coaches use their weekly training sessions as an important vehicle for social change. They act as role-models, teaching three social awareness about relevant issues such as substance drug abuse, alcohol abuse, gambling, child rights, school education & motivation, leadership, trafficking, HIV/AIDS, violence, environment, women's rights, gender equity and female empowerment and disability.



[www.indochinastarfish.org](http://www.indochinastarfish.org)

## Contact Us

For all queries please contact Gráinne at [glf@indochinastarfish.org](mailto:glf@indochinastarfish.org).

For queries relating to our Australia operations please contact [info@indochinastarfish.org](mailto:info@indochinastarfish.org).

[f /isf.cambodia](https://www.facebook.com/isf.cambodia) | [i /isfcambodia](https://www.instagram.com/isfcambodia) | [y ISF Cambodia](https://www.youtube.com/ISFCambodia) | [t /isfcambodia](https://www.twitter.com/isfcambodia)