



Kundalini Yoga Cambodia

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5 YEARS KUNDALINI YOGA CAMBODIA

At the beginning of 2012 we celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Kundalini Yoga Cambodia programme. It has been an exciting experience since we started in January 2007 with this project to introduce Kundalini Yoga and Meditation technology in Cambodia.



Over the last five years the project has gone through many ups and downs, and continues to challenge.

Manifesting its objectives, and working as a team, building a community and dealing with not always supportive circumstances demand commitment, endurance, flexibility and the capacity to be creative and innovative. But the vision of our project continues to be relevant and achievable.

We have gained valuable experience and we have more and more anecdotal evidence that practicing Kundalini Yoga and Meditation does not only improve the general health condition of students releasing stress and providing mental balance, the different techniques also build personal strength and self-confidence. The practice is a good entry point to work on behavior and life skills. And through the practice many students find clarity and direction for their lives.

We have also built a group of qualified teachers, Cambodian and international, now teaching at the Kundalini Yoga House in Phnom Penh and in local communities, schools, and social institutions. We trained nine Cambodians up to international certification level, two of which have almost finished the advanced level 2 training and completed a Healing Arts course as well. Eleven

The vision of the Kundalini Yoga Cambodia project is to make the healing capacity of the many Kundalini Yoga and Meditation techniques available to ordinary Cambodians. The mission of the project is to train Cambodian teachers who can teach yoga and meditation in their communities, and can train others to become teachers as well.

The reason behind our activities is that Kundalini Yoga and Meditation can help to heal the trauma of the past: the imprints of violent suppression and genocide, displacement, occupation and international isolation. Equally important, the technology can help to heal the wounds inflicted on Cambodian people in more recent history, through poverty, domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, the impact and stigma of killer diseases such as HIV/Aids and Tuberculosis.

In our activities we try to reach those who normally don't attend yoga classes because they lack the time or the resources, or because of the social and cultural threshold: the image of yoga being for the rich, the beautiful, the educated...

international teachers have obtained level 1 certification. Most teachers have also attended specialized training, for example Yoga for Children, Reiki Healing, etc.



We introduced a Basic Teacher Training course, using Khmer (the local language), and adapted for beginning local teachers to learn how to correctly teach a Kundalini Yoga class to community members. The course uses some of the basic but very effective kriyas and breath and meditation techniques. Twenty two Cambodians are now teaching classes in their community or integrate the technology in their work environment. About twenty five more are being trained. There is continued interest in similar basic trainings and we are

currently piloting a Basic Conscious Pregnancy course. Given the positive results of the Basic Teacher Training programme in Cambodia we have also been asked to set up a similar programme for local communities and community workers in Burma focusing on healing stress and trauma, and on peace and reconciliation.

Our community outreach activities have focused on working with children, young adults, early career persons as well as with people in the mid-life and elderly period. Many of the students and beneficiaries are young adults and the classes and training help them to build a moral and behavioral foundation for their future lives.

Teaching in community environments, we reached out, among others, to a community living with HIV/Aids, a refuge for girls and young women, orphanages, a rural community development project, a vocational training centre for kids scavenging on one of the cities dump-sites, young people living in low-income and re-settlement communities.

Daily morning yoga classes on one of the national TV channels reaches out into the provinces and rural communities.



Building a Kundalini Yoga and Meditation community has reached the point that we created the Kundalini Yoga Cambodia Teachers Association (KYCTA) to support the development and quality of the programme and to serve the teachers and those interested in broadening its reach. As with all our activities, also the community and the Teachers Association are organic entities growing and fluctuating with the circumstances.

We have not been able to formally register Kundalini Yoga Cambodia as a legal entity. The pending adoption of a new law on non-governmental organizations and

associations made us delay the process we initiated in 2010. We hope to be able to move ahead on this in the new year.

The programme and its activities are managed by a team of dedicated Cambodian teachers, who run the Kundalini Yoga house, and are the foundation for most of the training and outreach activities. Supported by an international advisor and other international teachers, the team offers regular public classes, pregnancy and post-natal classes, and kids classes. In 2011 we had on average 360 students per month, of which about 70% came to the sadhana and other donation classes. With growing experience and insight we also receive more and more requests for individualized yoga and meditation healing and therapy.



To respond to the interest in supplementary services we have linked with a professional naturopathy practitioner and also offer Pilates classes at the Kundalini Yoga House.

Classes, services, and renting out the space at the Kundalini Yoga house continue to be the regular source of income for the core-part of the programme. This income sustains the team, the house, basic expenses and some of the outreach activities. For some of the outreach activities we have received funding from outside Cambodia, in particular from the community interest group WOG in the Netherlands and from the Hanneke Meijers Memory Fund. Donations help to make up for the shortage in income and funding.



Financial sustainability has been the biggest challenge we have had to deal with in the last five years. After a period of growth, being close to break even at the end of year three, student numbers in following years have been lower while costs went up. 2010 was a difficult year for the team and the development of the programme stagnated. The momentum came back in 2011 with new outreach activities and more private classes and more services at The House. Competition in the wellness sector, including more yoga classes

being on offer in town, has had a negative impact on student numbers.

Another challenge is the stability of the core team that manages the programme and The House. A number of Cambodian teachers have moved to other jobs and are less available to teach classes. One of the lead teachers has left for two years on

special study leave to study a master's in Psychology. The other lead teacher also has taken on a master study, focusing on business and finance. New teachers are coming up, completing their studies and moving into management positions.



The year 2012 will be a crucial year which will prove if the project can sustain itself into the future or not. The main challenge is to achieve a lasting balance in income and expenses, and as part of our strategy we are looking for a good but cheaper location as a base for our activities. We may also share teaching space with other organizations in different parts of the city. We will groom new team members to take on some of the administrative and management tasks, support them in teaching classes that

attract more international and Cambodian students at The House and in teaching specialized classes. We want to expand our outreach activities.

Being more active in attracting additional support from donors is another challenge. And we are aware that we have to remain alert and innovative to achieve our vision while being competitive in what has become a yoga and wellness market with many players.



We have only been able to reach this far, thanks to the support of all friends of Kundalini Yoga Cambodia. We are very grateful for all donations and other support we received during the five years that we have been running this programme.

Kundalini Yoga Cambodia Team
Kanika, Pirong, Seila, Hak, Sophea, Mlis, Nary, Tonie

Note to the pictures: Teachers who have completed the Basic Teacher Training course teach yoga and meditation to kids at the Wat Pot Community for People Living with HIV/Aids.

Supporting Kundalini Yoga Cambodia:

We need your ongoing support to maintain and develop our programme. We are in need of financial support for

- the running costs of the Kundalini Yoga Cambodia Team, The House, and the programme activities
- scholarships for Basic Teacher Training and/or Level 1 Teacher Training
- outreach activities in the communities
- the outreach into Burma

Contact us by email or phone on how to transfer your contributions.