

I am delighted to announce that the Nginn Karet Foundation for Cambodia (NKFC) is organising a Royal Benefit Gala at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in November 2019, with the aim of raising at least \$300,000 to support the next phase of NKFC's activities – the founding of the first professional Academy of Art in Banteay Srei.

I can hardly believe that it has been twenty years since our inaugural fundraising gala at the National History Museum in London in May 1999, and nineteen since our second Fundraising Gala at the Cipriani 42nd Street in New York in October 2000. The generosity of our sponsors and donors at those events and beyond raised enough funds to fuel 20 years of the core operation costs for the NKFC in Cambodia.

For 20 years we have been investing in the development and implementation of a hugely successful sustainable development programme with over 2868 families (25,000+ people) in 14 of the most destitute villages of Banteay Srei, some of the last occupied territories of the Khmer Rouge. In the early years we tackled basic needs such as clean water, healthcare, built 3 primary schools and provided simple agricultural training but the later programmes (2007 onwards) focused on reintroducing traditions that had been forgotten or lost in the aftermath of the traumatic Khmer Rouge regime such as traditional dance, music and craft skills.

To enable us to build on the successes of the past - the most notable of which is the renowned **Sacred Dancers of Angkor** professional dance troupe formed from the dancers trained at the Preah Ream Buppha Devi NKFC Conservatoire since 2007 - the NKFC needs to raise at least \$300,000 to fund the next phase which will focus on providing transferable marketable skills to the local young people through creating the first Academy of Art in Banteay Srei. Our aim is to train young people (aged 6 – 25) across 3 main disciplines – (1) traditional dance & music; (2) craft skills & (3) cookery. The traditional dance & music training will continue to be delivered in our existing Salas (Halls) at the Conservatoire but we need to build two additional Salas to house a new cookery school and a dormitory block for those not able to commute and secure operating costs for the next 5 years.

We are proud to have the patronage of HRH Princess Buppha Devi, former Prima Ballerina of the Cambodian Royal Ballet, the preeminent source of knowledge for Khmer Classical Dance whose guidance and advice ensures the authenticity of our teaching.

We have the support of the new Governor of Siem Reap and will continue to work closely with the Cambodian Ministry of Culture & Fine Arts, the Cambodian Ministry of Education & Youth and UNESCO, the local authorities and the villagers themselves to deliver these exciting new opportunities.

Thank you for your support