

PRESS RELEASE

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NUS Medicine students bring hearing care to Cambodian villagers

NUS Medicine students and WS Audiology collaborate on Project Battambang to conduct screenings for hearing loss and donate hearing aids to villagers in Poipet, Cambodia

Singapore, 3 January 2025 — In Poipet, Cambodia, one of the country’s most underserved regions beset by significant health challenges—including hearing loss—more than 600 villagers received vital health screenings that for the first time included professional hearing assessments.

The screenings and hearing assessments were made possible with the help of [Project Battambang](#), an initiative led by students from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS Medicine). Since its inception in 2010, Project Battambang has conducted nearly 10,200 health screenings, uncovering undiagnosed conditions ranging from cataracts to infectious diseases like tuberculosis. The recent initiative that took place in December 2024 involved 28 Year 1 and Year 2 students from NUS Medicine.

Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that 1.6 billion people live with some form of hearing loss, a number expected to rise to 2.5 billion by 2050, with at least 700 million requiring hearing rehabilitation.¹ In Cambodia, where access to hearing care is scarce², Project Battambang’s collaboration with audiologists from [WS Audiology](#), a global leader in the hearing aid industry, is crucial in bringing advanced hearing care to Poipet. The initiative enabled diagnosing hearing impairments with greater precision and provide targeted support to the community.

As part of this collaboration, WS Audiology also donated 250 hearing aids to the project, ensuring that villagers identified with hearing loss could receive the necessary devices. Between 5 and 10% of the villagers were found to suffer from some form of hearing loss that would not otherwise have been diagnosed or treated. Over 85% of these affected villagers were successfully fitted with hearing aids, allowing them to hear clearly for the first time in years.

A 71-year-old villager, who received one of these hearing aids, said, “It’s like a veil has been lifted. The world sounds clearer now.”

¹ World Health Organization, World Report on Hearing, 2021

² The Journal of Laryngology & Otology, Access to ear and hearing care services in Cambodia: a qualitative enquiry into experiences of key informants, 2022

Lim Yu En, one of two Project Battambang Project Directors, and a Year 2 student at NUS Medicine, said, "We learned that true healthcare goes beyond medical treatment. It's about addressing the root causes of health issues, such as access to clean water and education. By taking a holistic approach, we can create lasting change."

Winston Poh, General Manager, Southeast Asia, WS Audiology, added, "At WS Audiology, we've always believed that better hearing opens up a world of connection and possibilities. Being part of Project Battambang has been deeply rewarding. We've seen how something as simple as hearing clearly can transform lives, from reconnecting with loved ones to engaging more fully in daily life. Collaborating with the dedicated students and communities in Poipet inspires us to continue making hearing care accessible to all."

"Through Project Battambang, our students are gaining invaluable insights into becoming compassionate doctors. Importantly, they are learning that improving the health of communities extends beyond medical care; it involves improving the economic and social conditions in which people live and work, as these factors influence health outcomes," remarked Associate Professor Marion Aw, Vice-Dean (Office for Students), NUS Medicine.

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About Project Battambang

Project Battambang is part of NUS Medicine's [Health, Humanitarian & Leadership \(HHL\) Programme](#), which aims to inculcate in medical students, a heart for service and help them become community-responsive and compassionate healthcare leaders committed to improving health outcomes for vulnerable communities. In recent years, Project Battambang has evolved into a collaborative initiative focused on addressing the long-term needs of communities in Poipet, including education, and clean water solutions. Beyond conducting health screenings and providing immediate assistance, NUS Medicine students work in close partnership with local organisations to design impactful educational programs, train local educators, and implement sustainable solutions that empower communities to shape their own futures.

While NUS Medicine students still play a pivotal role in initiating and overseeing projects, they work towards building self-reliant systems led by Cambodian committees. This includes recruiting a permanent Cambodian committee to manage health, education, and development programs, and collaborations with organizations such as Love Without Boundaries (LWB) School and Mother of Peace Kindergarten (MOPK) to ensure continuity. The transition is not about relinquishing involvement but about fostering a partnership model where local stakeholders gradually lead the programmes, with NUS Medicine students offering guidance or specific expertise.

From a student-led, health-focused outreach programme, Project Battambang has evolved into a partnership-driven initiative helmed by local leaders, prioritising sustainability and empowering the communities of Poipet. NUS Medicine students now serve as facilitators, focusing on capacity-building, technical expertise, and strategic oversight. Their role includes training local educators and healthcare workers, collaborating with NGOs for resource mobilisation, and developing scalable projects such as water filtration systems and leadership camps.

Upcoming initiatives aim to expand access to clean water through partnerships with organisations like Planet Water Foundation, enhance education through the Light A Dream Scholarship programme, and promote community health with targeted screening and monitoring programmes. By embedding sustainability into every initiative—through local leadership, long-term partnerships, and education—Project Battambang ensures its programmes are community-owned and impactful, enabling Poipet to thrive independently.

For more information, please visit the Project website: <https://www.projectbattambang.com/>

About National University of Singapore (NUS)

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 16 colleges, faculties and schools across three campuses in Singapore, with more than 40,000 students from 100 countries enriching our vibrant and diverse campus community. We have also established more than 20 NUS Overseas Colleges entrepreneurial hubs around the world.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, research centres of excellence, corporate labs and more than 30 university-level research institutes focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial

systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research and cybersecurity.

For more information on NUS, please visit nus.edu.sg.

About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine)

The NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is Singapore's first and largest medical school. Our enduring mission centres on nurturing highly competent, values-driven and inspired healthcare professionals to transform the practice of medicine and improve health around the world. Through a dynamic and future-oriented five-year curriculum that is inter-disciplinary and inter-professional in nature, our students undergo a holistic learning experience that exposes them to multiple facets of healthcare and prepares them to become visionary leaders and compassionate doctors and nurses of tomorrow. Since the School's founding in 1905, more than 12,000 graduates have passed through our doors. In our pursuit of health for all, our strategic research programmes focus on innovative, cutting-edge biomedical research with collaborators around the world to deliver high impact solutions to benefit human lives. The School is the oldest institution of higher learning in the National University of Singapore and a founding institutional member of the National University Health System. It is one of the leading medical schools in Asia and ranks among the best in the world (Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024 by subject and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by subject 2024).

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <https://medicine.nus.edu.sg/>

About WS Audiology (WSA)

Formed in 2019, through the merger of Sivantos and Widex, WS Audiology combines over 140 years' experience in pioneering the use of technology to help people with hearing loss hear the sounds that make life wonderful. With truly differentiated brands like Widex, Signia, Rexton, Audio Service and Vibe, and with diverse assets across wholesale, retail, online, managed care and diagnostic solutions, we are active in over 130 markets. WS Audiology employs 12,500+ people and is privately owned by the Tøpholm and Westermann families and the Lundbeck Foundation, as well as funds under the management of EQT. As a global leader, our ambition is to unlock human potential by making wonderful sound part of everyone's life.