



Clear Vision for Children in Cambodia

During their visit to Cambodia in July to celebrate the first anniversary of Kidshelp English School, Patrick Byron and Steve Wells met with Intan Kosen, a friend of Kidshelp who works closely with Caris Foundation International. Caris is partnering with Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister on a nationwide programme to screen the eyesight of all schoolchildren aged over 12 and has already screened over 600,000 children; nearly half of the children in their targeted range.

Caris Foundation is a private, non-profit organisation dedicated to reducing poverty and alleviating human suffering through sustainable, community-based solutions. Founded and funded by a private family, it is headquartered in Texas, USA.



Although the Caris team was scheduled and preparing to leave for a six-week mission to Kenya in mid-September, they agreed to conduct free eye screenings for Kidshelp schools on 8 September 2026. The focus would be on students, with additional places if available for teachers and parents. Finding a suitable date was challenging because the team would resume state school screenings once schools reopened, while some Kidshelp students would be away during the holiday period.

The event was confirmed for 8 September, and leaflets, posters and social media announcements were used to promote it.



KKS social media



KES social media

Having set off early from Phnom Penh and stopping for breakfast, the Caris team of 8 arrived at Khemara Kidshelp School (KKS) at 7:30 am and set up screening stations in five classrooms. By 8:15 am, around 150 students had arrived. The team explained the process before efficiently screening students.



Most were found to have good eyesight and were able to leave for home, while those requiring further assessment progressed through a series of detailed tests.



Students needing corrective lenses underwent up to five stages of examination, including distance and near-vision tests, lens fitting and checks for conditions such as cataracts and glaucoma. Those prescribed glasses were allowed to choose frames from a range on offer and had the correct lenses fitted while they waited. The glasses were then checked for correct fitting and the students left with the glasses and copies of their prescription for personal and school records.

By 9:30 am, most students had been screened. The programme then expanded to teachers and parents. Although 40 adults had originally been planned, attendance ultimately reached around 80. The Caris team with their vast experience of working in the countryside, were happy to support the people, after all most did require glasses.



Following a short lunch break, the team travelled to Kidshelp English School (KES), arriving at 12:30 pm. Screening resumed at 1:00 pm, with students who passed their tests returning directly to class. As in the morning session, those requiring further assessment or glasses were directed through additional testing and fitting stations.





The final student screenings began at 2:30 pm, followed by teachers and parents.



While some students were unable to attend as they were away from the village during the school holidays, Kidshelp hopes to use previously trained Kidshelp scholarship students to carry out preliminary screenings and refer those needing further professional testing to a Caris centre.



At 4:15 pm, after a demanding 10-hour day, the Caris team began the 90-minute journey back to Phnom Penh, where the unpacking of equipment and paperwork still awaited them. Their dedication made a significant difference to the community.

Number of students and adults screen on the day.

KKS/KES	Screened	Detail Testing	Glasses Issued
Children	309	26	23
Adults	120	120	114
Total	429	146	137

We thank Caris Foundation International, the OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation for providing the glasses, and the headmasters and teachers who gave up their holiday time to support the project. And final thanks to volunteer Atticus Johnson who provided write-up and photographs.



Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks for your trust and continued support. Your commitment makes a significant contribution to sustainably improving the living and learning conditions of the children.

Sincerely,
Your Kidshelp team in Cambodia, England and Germany

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