

Geraldine Cox

Founder of Sunrise Cambodia & Keynote Speaker

Geraldine Cox is the founder and President of Sunrise Cambodia, a sustainable community development organisation with a focus on Cambodia's most vulnerable children and the communities in which they live.

She resides in the Kandal province of Cambodia, where she is a mentor to the children in her care. She also meets with sponsors and donors who visit the Sunrise Learning Centres and those who offer their support from several parts of the world.

A well-known and highly respected humanitarian figure, with a vibrant personality, Geraldine makes regular public and media appearances to assist with fundraising appeals. She is also a sought-after public speaker in Australia and around the world. Geraldine has been invited to speak for audiences that include National Press Club, Canberra; the Sydney Institute, Sydney; the Parliamentary Sub Committee on Human Rights, Canberra; The Asia Society, Melbourne and the University of Sydney, International School of Public Health.

In 2016, Geraldine gave a keynote speech during the University of South Australia Nelson Mandela Lecture Series and in August 2017, Geraldine presented at the United Nations-sponsored 8th University Leadership Scholars Symposium hosted by Humanitarian Affairs UK in Bangkok, Thailand.

Geraldine was nominated by Ernst & Young for the Entrepreneur Award of the Year in the Social Category for South Australia. In 2014, Geraldine became a member of the Humanitarian Affairs Advisory Board, UK and in 2013, she was appointed a Board Director of the International Advisory Board of the Oasis Africa Australia.

More about Geraldine Cox:

Geraldine was considered to be the 'wild child' of the family. In her early 20s, after learning she would never be able to conceive, she joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and embarked on a life-changing journey that led to the discovery of her calling. In 1970, she was posted to Phnom Penh, Cambodia; a time when the country was in turmoil due to the Vietnam War. This first posting significantly shaped the person she is today.

Geraldine went on to explore the world with postings in Manila, Bangkok, Tehran and Washington DC. In 1987, Geraldine left her government role and worked for the Chase Manhattan Bank in Sydney, Australia for eight years.



In 1995, at the age of 50, Geraldine found herself unemployed and yearning to head back to Cambodia. She returned and worked as an Executive Assistant to the Cabinet Director of the Prime Minister of Cambodia, HRH Prince Norodom Ranariddh, son of King Norodom Sihanouk. He appointed Geraldine as Ambassador-at-Large to assist in achieving a truly independent, neutral, peaceful and cooperative Cambodia. Her initial goal was to bring to the attention of the Australian people the plight of many Cambodians, and to raise funds and procure equipment to help improve living conditions and provide education, training and income-generation opportunities for resettled communities in Cambodia. Geraldine also assisted in the running of Princess Norodom Marie's residential care centre for orphaned children.

A military coup occurred in 1997 and Geraldine found that she was the only one left to look after the children. The royal family had fled Cambodia. Geraldine became widely known as M'Day Thom (Big Mum). Her bravery during this time formed the basis of her prominent humanitarian reputation.

Geraldine is also a published author. Her first book, *Home is Where the Heart Is*, was published in 2000 by Pan Macmillian. She is currently working on her next book.

Geraldine was also the subject of the documentary, *My Khmer Heart*, directed by Janine Hosking and produced by Leonie Lowe. The documentary won the Hollywood Film Festival Documentary of the Year award in 2000 and has been screened at many international film festivals (including the Montreal World Film Festival) and by prestigious American broadcasters, HBO and the Discovery Channel. It was also shortlisted for an Academy Award nomination.

Geraldine's story has been featured on high-profile Australian television programmes including *Australian Story*, *The Sunday Programme*, *This Is Your Life*, *Four Corners*, *Today Tonight*, *The 7.30 Report*, *60 Minutes*, *Talking Heads* and *The 7pm Project*. She has delivered several keynote speeches internationally and is a renowned humanitarian figure whose work has made a significant difference for the communities in Cambodia.

Geraldine Cox talks about:

- Finding true meaning in life
- Overcoming adversity
- Stepping up when needed, and
- Creating a life worthy of living.

Client Testimonials



Geraldine Cox participated in December 2018 to a Connected Women event hosted at Google. Theme was on "Benefits of Change" and event was attended by 270+ men and women from Digital and Media. Geraldine was a wild card for that event with an inspirational talk on Persevering through adversity. She shared her personal journey and was a total hit for the audience scoring a 9.6/10 in post event survey with quotes like "Geraldine was so inspiring", "What a character and inspiration for all" or "Loved Geraldine's inspirational story and energy". The most common social media tags for her session was "#If Cambodia has taught me anything is to not waste my energy on things I cannot change". Geraldine is not only a fantastic speaker but she has the ability to connect with her audience to make each and every single of us rethink our realities or take perspective on life differently. It has been a true pleasure working with Geraldine and her team to coordinate all the logistics and theme. Thanks again Geraldine for embarking with our community on the journey of inspiring the leaders of tomorrow in Tech and Digital to think about personal or professional changes by embracing diversity at the core of their job!

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