



# Summer 2024 Newsletter

*News from Trailblazer Foundation —*

*A continued flow of projects and accomplishments...*



**A Real Difference is Being Made!**

Playground Equipment for Beng School

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***Delivering health, education, and prosperity to rural Cambodia...***

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## A Note From Trailblazer's Executive Director

*Hello Trailblazer Friends,*

*It's hard to believe that we are already halfway through 2024! Where is the year going? Let me tell you! **Trailblazer's year is going steady** with a continued flow of projects and accomplishments. This year, like every year, a real difference has been and is being made in the lives of rural Cambodian families because of your wonderful and generous investments. **We are so grateful to your continued interest and support.***

*Perhaps you may have thought or felt that your contribution(s) seem too small to matter or make a difference. But in truth, **your contribution(s), combined with those of others, adds up** to quite a sum and does make a true and meaningful life-changing impact.*

*I'm sure you've heard someone say, "I'm only one person, what difference can I make?" **Your gifts are vital** to the continuation of our work and give us the financial stability to keep the organization operating. We can't thank you enough. In this rather lengthy newsletter you will **read about all the good things** that have taken place because you cared and made a difference.*

*Best wishes always,*



Chris Coats

Executive Director



***"There are no small acts. No act infused with goodness can ever be considered small."***

Matthew Kelly, Author of Holy Moments

# Health Program

## *On-going Support*

An April 25, 2024 article in the Khmer Times speaks to the issue of **malnutrition in Cambodian children**, which is a large focus of Trailblazer's work. Here are a few excerpts from that article.

*Ouk Rabun, chairman of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development, said yesterday that this year the rate of underweight and thin children under the age of five in Cambodia remains a challenge to resolve.*

*He said that according to the UNICEF report, wasting of children under five years old is still the main problem, affecting 10% of the populace in 2014, with the rate remaining high at 9.8% this year.*

*However, he added that the issue of adequate nutrition as well as for implementing the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme in Cambodia – especially in the rural remote areas – remains a challenge which requires urgent intervention by the government.*

*"According to the Cambodia Demographic Health Survey 2021-2022, 22% of children under five are stunted, 10% are wasted, 16% are underweight, while 4% of children under five are overweight," noted Kimthan.*

Since its inception in 2004, Trailblazer Foundation has had a close relationship with the Rotary International community, receiving important initial and **ongoing support from Clubs and Districts across the United States, and around the globe**. In all, Trailblazer has received 25 grants from Rotary clubs in the United States, 22 grants from clubs outside of the USA, and two international grants. Totaling \$288,203 in grants.

It is not surprising that many in the Rotary community have chosen to support Trailblazer. Rotary International is dedicated to six areas of **focus to build international relationships, improve lives, and create a better world**. Of those six, three directly relate to Trailblazer's work: [1] providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, [2] supporting education, and [3] growing local economies.



Members of the Rotary Denver Southeast International Service Committee

# Health Program (Continued)

## On-going Support

Members of the Rotary Denver Southeast International Service Committee recently **visited Siem Reap and the water projects their club supported**. Here is what Rob and Steve had to say about their visit.

*"After attending the 2024 Rotary International Convention in Singapore May 25th - 29th on May 31st Rob McMahon and Steve Werner from the Rotary Club of Denver Southeast embarked on a mission to Cambodia to observe the installation of Trailblazer's bio-sand water filters near the village of Svay Chek. Thanks to Chris Coats, we were connected with Ratanak who provided transportation, arranged a meeting with the local village chief and a tour of homes actively sharing the bio-sand water filter, complete with the Rotary Wheel logo with Denver Southeast name stenciled on the water filters. Rotary is looking forward in a continued relationship with Trailblazer and the wonderful people of Cambodia. Rob will be the President of the Rotary Club of Denver Southeast in July, during the past three years he has served as Chair of the International Services Committee. Club Member Steve is known globally for his expertise in Water Sanitation and Hygiene [WASH] projects, a former Peace Corp volunteer he is known for countless WASH related activities. Steve has held the role of Executive Director for Water For People, an international nonprofit, whose mission is to assist people in developing nations to gain access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation. Rotary International is looking forward to our continued relationship with the wonderful people of Cambodia and the Trailblazer Foundation."*



Steve and Rob from RC of Denver SE



We met and surpassed our spring campaign goal for latrines. Funds generated \$11,219 **exceeding our goal** to construct 25 latrines.

*"So, decide today, once and for all, that each day for the rest of your life will have a positive impact."*

Matthew Kelly, Author of Holy Moments

Please visit our website for more information about our Health Program:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/health-program>

# Food Security Program

## Training Rural Villagers



Food security is the ability to have “reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.” **One way to support rural families in achieving food security is to train them** in how to grow or raise more food, both in quantity and variety. For Trailblazer, this means providing various agriculture trainings for rural villagers in Cambodia.

For 2024, we committed to providing 63 different agricultural trainings with 10-15 participants in each training. These trainings include:

- 9 on Integrated Framing System
- 8 on homestead gardens
- 7 on soil management
- 7 on fertilizer and pesticide application techniques
- 21 on composting
- 2 on raising chickens

With each trainee representing an average family size of 5, we project a **direct benefit to 630 to 945 people** through this year’s agricultural trainings.

[Give 'In Honor or Memory of' Someone Special - Scan the QR above ^](#)



We would like to acknowledge a former volunteer, Brad, who brought a team over to Cambodia this spring and provided Trailblazer with a **gift-in-kind donation** of three soil testers to test for moisture, PH levels, and soil quality (pictured above). One soil tester was provided to the Farmer Community Group in Pouk for its members to use. The farmers are very happy to receive this technology that will aid them in being more successful with ensuring their land is healthy to grow their produce. Brad also gave several 100 insulin syringes, catheters, and alcohol wipes to be shared with the village medical clinic.

Please visit our website for more information about our Food Security Program:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/food-security-program>

# Education Program

## 12 Schools in 20 Year

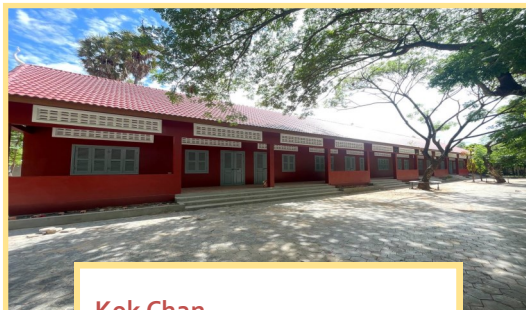
We have **two school construction projects this year!** Both of these school projects were made possible with generous investment of donors through our business partner Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy. The first school is located in Kok Chan and was completed on May 14th. The second school is located in Tapang and will be completed in the coming months. Both schools have their inauguration ceremony scheduled in September, 2024.

Through the generous contributions received over the past 20 years, Trailblazer has **constructed 12 school buildings to date.** Each building is designed to accommodate 480 students in two shifts: morning and afternoon. These schools can benefit 5,760 students every year by providing them a safe environment in which to study.

A generous donor through our business partner Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy donated funds that provided four toilets for the Tapang Primary School [two stalls per side: two for male students and two for female students]. And this donor satisfied a wish list from the teachers at Tapang for office equipment and supplies, tools for the children, and a playground swing.

A donor you keep hearing about, Dale Jankovitz, has kindly donated funds to supply 10 toilets for families in Beng village. He also sent funding for much needed office equipment at the Beng School: a laptop computer, a color printer, and an LCD projector for administration purposes.

We are happy to report the **successful delivery in April of 25 bicycles** to selected 5th grade students at Prolit Primary School in Reul commune, so they will be able to travel to high school (grade 6) after they complete grade 5.



Kok Chan



Tapang

Please visit our website for more information about our Education Development Program:

[https://  
thetrailblazerfoundation.org  
/education-program](https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/education-program)



# Celebrating 20 Years

## School Construction



2009 Ta Trav #1



2005 Sras #1



2010 Phlong Kindergarten



2014 TaTrav Middle School



2007 Sras #2 School



Ground Breaking Ceremony



2014 Romoul Kindergarten



2016 Sret School



2021 Kok Dong



2018 Beng School



2018 Tapang School

# Economic Development Program

## Testimony of a Partner

**Villagers have difficulty applying for a bank loan** or are simply unable to apply for a bank loan due to the required paperwork. Trailblazer helps to establish “Village Funds”, which is a village-owned and managed micro-loan program, built to foster economic development for the residents of that village. It started as a strategy to empower the recipients of our products by giving them a way to “buy in” to the project and make it successful.



We are proud to be a **partner with the Tawingo Fund** who supported our Economic Development program in 2023 with a grant to provide an influx of funds into two selected Village Funds [VF]. These VFs had become stagnant and did not offer enough capital to continue helping villagers expand their economic interests on a larger scale. With an influx of capital VF members were able to borrow larger sums of money to buy livestock, seeds or fertilizers to better feed their family; secure medical care; start a small business to improve their family’s economic status; or purchase a motorbike or bicycle so they can have better access to work and school.

Two villages with an established, well-managed VF in place, and a successful flow of loans and interest activity were selected for this project: Kok Knang and Run. They have become the **first prototype** for this type of project. We value our partnership with Tawingo Fund because they understand the importance of supporting these villages with more capital to increase the economic opportunities of its villagers. Here is what Jenny, the Executive Director of Tawingo Fund has to say about Trailblazer:

*“Tawingo Fund is honored to partner with Trailblazer Foundation. Their steadfast dedication to empowering communities through sustainable development initiatives is truly remarkable. From delivering clean water solutions to promoting education, ensuring food security, driving economic development, and facilitating healthcare access in remote areas, their approach is not just about short-term fixes but about creating lasting change that uplifts entire communities.*”

*Despite being a small team, Trailblazer Foundation consistently surpasses our expectations. Their professionalism, passion, and genuine care are evident in every project they undertake. Moreover, their commitment to transparency, accountability, and collaboration makes our partnership deeply rewarding. We are privileged to collaborate with them and look forward to continuing our shared journey of creating positive change.” Jenny*

This year, our team will provide **41 refresher trainings** on Village Funds. It is our intent to **establish new Village Funds** in 4 villages and **introduce Village Funds** to 8 more villages.

### To Donate

By Mail: PO Box 271767, Fort Collins, CO 80527

Online: <https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/donate>

Please visit our website for more information about our Economic Development Program:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/economic-development-prog>



## Other News

### Celebrating 20 years

As we celebrate our 20 year anniversary, I would like to **share comments from those who have known us over the years**, supported us, or have been involved in our efforts on other levels.

I thought you may find the story of **an amazing young lady, Anak**, from Srah village. She describes, in her own words, the events that occurred in her life between 2004 and 2024. Srah was the first village that Trailblazer went into to begin its work.

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### Anak's Story - 20 years later

*"In 2004, I was in grade 3 in Kok Khnang, located approximately five kilometers from my home. I alternated between walking and riding my bike to school. Trailblazer was there at the time, helping rural areas by constructing schools, installing water filters, drilling wells, providing agricultural supplies, and vocational training to my community.*

*I observed two foreigners there, Chris and Scott. I was too little to remember them well, but I always saw them come to my house where we shared meals under the mango trees. Even though I was small, I knew they were so kind, and it made me think about how much I wanted to know English. I started to see them more often in my village and have lunch together at my house.*

*There were many things that made my life different. My family had a big number of people in the house. I didn't see that we were improving anything due to working in the rice field and no one stayed in school. I wanted to help my brothers and my relatives to go farther than me. My community had no educated people and I always saw people drinking rice wine. I wanted to be someone who could help others around me. All these issues helped and encouraged me to think more deeply about going to college.*

*I had some amazing inspirations from the environment around me: my parents, my community, and Trailblazer. After seeing Trailblazer visit my village, I decided I wanted to work for an NGO and help others in the same way that Trailblazer did. I began to consider my objective to collaborate as a teacher or work with a non-profit. That truly touched me, therefore I decided to return to school. I missed Chris and Scott who visited our village and I believed that if I stopped studying I would not see them again. Since I intended to stay in contact with them I reasoned that learning the language would help me communicate with them when we next crossed paths.*



Please visit our blog to read more stories from the field:  
<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/blog>

## **Anak's Story - 20 years later (Continued)**

*There were certain things that impacted the decisions I made that took me in the direction of where I am now 20 years later. I decided to drop out of school in grade 7 because my father wanted me to study hairdressing and have a salon in the village. I visited a vocational training facility in Siem Reap city with Trailblazer and saw that English classes were provided to the residents who lived there. I chose to study hairdressing and stopped my education. After finishing the 8 months of vocational training I went back to my village to do hairdressing, nails, and makeup. In the mean time, Trailblazer had constructed a beauty salon in my village and provided the necessary equipment for me to have a job in the village and to make it easier for villagers.*

*During that time I also taught English to the children in the village in the evening. I loved those moments. Later, I decided to give up all those things to go back to school because I saw that I could not reach what I wanted to do. I knew it affected Trailblazer because they had helped me to learn those skills and expected me to work in the village. Later Trailblazer offered me to learn about sewing. I joined that class for a month. I made skirts and did a lot for the students who studied in Srah village.*

*The decisions I made through those 20 years had an impact on all of the people who mattered to me, including my parents, siblings and Trailblazer. I knew from those experiences that I could readily identify with who I am, and that we shouldn't force ourselves to do things that we don't enjoy or want to do. I am also aware that not many people truly knew anything about me.*

*I would like to express my gratitude to Trailblazer for providing me with the necessary skills to enable me to live independently in Siem Reap. Without those actions, I would not be who I am today. If these experiences had not made a difference in my life, I believe I would still be in my village working as a farmer and taking care of my salon duties. Trailblazer gave me a chance to explore everything. Again, thanks for this." Anak*

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## **And here is a Donor, Elise's Testimony**

*"I began to support Trailblazer early on as a member of our church was on the newly-formed Board. I was quite certain she would be involved with only a worthy organization - and I knew the folks who would be leading Trailblazer were solid people with serving hearts. As time went by, I would write trailblazer a check now and then, but I finally realized that a steady income, where they could count on a fixed support, would be better support. So .. I arranged for a monthly donation through my credit card. And I have been so pleased to be part of Trailblazer's work, making the lives of under-privileged families so much better and healthier. Their children can grow up with healthy bodies, and can get to school ready to learn. The men are enabled to be more productive farmers, and the women develop skills to better help support their families. AND, the Executive Director, Chris Coats, regularly keeps us informed of Trailblazer's impressive accomplishments - important for donors to see! Trailblazer is not an organization that simply gives handouts, but importantly very much involves the people as they improve their own lives." Elise*

**You can make an even greater impact by setting up a monthly donation. Consider Setting Up Your Recurring Donation Today by scanning the QR Code -->**



USE YOUR PHONE CAMERA  
TO SCAN THE DONATION CODE

## You may wonder: How can I help?

### *July 10th Bonus Day!*

*Donations of \$100+ through GlobalGiving get matched to stretch your impact further. Mark Your Calendar. Learn more about July Bonus Day on our website.*



### **Below is a list of how your gift(s) can change the life of a poor rural family:**

- \$20 buys a school uniform
- \$50 supports a rural farmer's agriculture training course
- \$75 buys a bicycle to keep a student in school
- \$100 buys a biosand water filter for up to 3 families [15 people or more]
- \$200 buys a latrine for a family [5 people on average]
- \$375 buys a well for up to 3 families [15 people or more]
- \* Donate to our general fund and help provide solid financial footing to our programs across the board.
- \* Become a **Trailblazer Champion** by setting up recurring donors to sustain the difference we are making.
- \* Check with your employer about a matching gift program and double your impact. We have a growing number of donors who are taking advantage of these wonderful programs.
- ◇ Like us on **Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn** and encourage your followers to like and follow us. Post comments and stories about our work.
- ◇ Share your stories describing your relationship with Trailblazer and why you support us on **Great NonProfits**.
- \* Become a funder by conducting a DIY Peer-to-Peer campaign.

### **Are you seeking an alternative way to give and receive tax benefits, you can:**

- Donate from your **Donor Advised Fund**;
- Donate **stocks or securities** to avoid capital gains tax and have a long-term impact;
- For those 70.5 or older, avoid extra income by **gifting from your IRA**;
- Gift under your Last Will and Testament** to ensure your impact will continue for generations;
- Designate Trailblazer Foundation as a **beneficiary on a life insurance policy**.

**As always, we are ever grateful for your participation and generosity. Our work is only made possible because of people like you who want to leave a legacy!**

**Your generous donations make a real difference in our mission. To keep our mission running strong, we kindly ask if you would consider adding 15% to your next donation to cover essential administrative costs. Thank you for your understanding and continued support!**



**Trailblazer Foundation**

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