



# Fall 2018 Newsletter

*News from Trailblazer Foundation—  
Wrapping Up Another Successful Year*



*Our new Board Member, Justine Auton, in Cambodia handing out toothbrushes*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note from the Executive Director	<a href="#">Page 2</a>
Health Program – Improving Sanitation and Hygiene	<a href="#">Page 3</a>
Food Security Program – Trainings Directly Benefitting 3,700	<a href="#">Page 4</a>
Education Program – Improved Learning Environments plus 100 Bicycles	<a href="#">Page 5</a>
Economic Development Program – Farmers More Successful after Training	<a href="#">Page 6</a>
Other News – Meet Our New Board Members	<a href="#">Page 7</a>

***Developing Ripples of Sustainability through Community Water Projects***

# A Note From Trailblazer's Executive Director

Hello Investors of Trailblazer,

In my summer letter, I talked about our challenge to raise funds to cover all our program and operational costs. Since then, some long-term donors have expressed appreciation for my having explained our financial situation. They shared that they were "awakened", and now have a better understanding of our challenge to close the gap between raising funds for products and services, and having sufficient funds for operational expenses not covered in the price of our products and services.

When I noted we keep our products or service prices competitive, I failed to say that the competition is with businesses in Cambodia. By keeping our products and services competitive, we must use general funds to subsidize the implementation of our products and services.

As an example: the price of a bio-sand water filter is listed as \$80. However, our "true" full cost to build and distribute a bio-sand water filter is \$110. That true cost includes pro-rated rent and utilities for the building, staff salary, petrol for the vehicle and cement mixer, materials required to build the water filter, and training included when the water filter is installed. But we cannot responsibly increase the price of our products and services to cover the costs of the entire organization, in Cambodia and the US.

Instead of using the term "general" funds, perhaps I should use the term "non-designated" funds. Non-designated funds are essential and crucial to maintaining every aspect of our programs and a healthy operational infrastructure. It takes less than \$15,000 per month to run our operations. That seems such a small amount for all that is accomplished to improve the health of the villagers and to raise them further out of poverty.

I know I am stating the obvious here, but I believe we all understand that we need:

- A building and associated utilities from which to operate
- Equipment and tools to drill wells and to make water filters
- Staff to manage and run the office
- Staff to drill the wells, make the water filters and construct the latrines
- Staff to conduct the agriculture trainings
- Vehicles to transport products and conduct services
- Phone, computers and internet for communication purposes

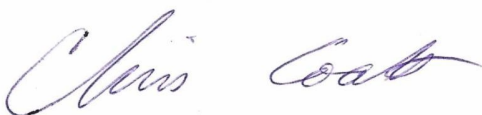
Without support for operations in total Trailblazer's programs could not function, and our efforts to make a difference in the livelihoods of rural Cambodians would cease.

Donors like you are the backbone of the organization. Your generosity over the years [be it in donations for products, services, or non-designated funds, or volunteering] has provided the vital support needed to directly serve our partner villagers and further Trailblazer's mission. We have been able to accomplish all of this because of your support.

We cannot express enough how much your investment has meant, and still means, to us and to the recipients whose lives have been changed for the better because you care. Your investment allows for you to be part of something bigger to help the world, and is truly making an impact.

You have shown yourself to be a generous and thoughtful donor, so as we draw near to the end of another year, I trust we can count on your generous support again. You can dedicate your gift in honor or memory of someone special for the holidays. Make it a gift that will keep on giving!

Thank you.



Chris Coats  
Co-Founder and Executive Director



# Health Program

## *Reducing Disease by Improving Sanitation and Hygiene*

According to the World Health Organization diarrhea continues to be the second leading cause of death among children in East Asia. High incidences of diarrheal diseases alone account for one fifth of the deaths of children age five and under in Cambodia, and an estimated 10,000 overall deaths annually, largely owing to lack of sanitation and poor hygiene practices. Less than 1 in 3 Cambodians have access to latrines and hand washing facilities, one of the lowest rates in Southeast Asia. Creating clean environments for children averts threats to their health and supports the best chance for them to have a prosperous life.

Nearly 70% of Cambodia's rural population – roughly 6.4 million people – still practice open defecation as their principle sanitation option. Findings from a 2010 National Sanitation and Hygiene Survey show that only 31.8% of Cambodians use latrines. The use of a toilet can decrease diarrheal deaths by 30%.

This makes Trailblazer's work all the more important and impactful. As of the end of September 2018, Trailblazer has:

- Distributed 336 water filters, reducing disease with safe drinking water and directly benefitting 1,680 people.
- Drilled 99 wells, giving increased access to water and directly benefitting 495 people.
- Conducted 43 latrine trainings on ways to reduce disease through improved sanitation and hygiene, a benefit to 215 people.



Ta Ey villagers attend training



Latrine beneficiary in Meanchey

**DONATE NOW**

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

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

# Food Security Program

## *Our Agricultural Trainings Directly Benefitted 3,700 People*

In 2018, Trailblazer provided agricultural trainings to 740 people (with 10 to 15 participants each). This included:

- 18 trainings on horticulture,
- 20 trainings on soil management,
- 10 trainings on composting, organic pesticide and fertilizer,
- 17 trainings on raising poultry.

With each trainee representing an average family size of 5, all totaled, our agricultural trainings directly benefitted 3,700 people. All these trainings were conducted by one Trailblazer staff, Chanto. Thank you, Chanto, for your hard work, skills and diligence to help these 740 farmers learn techniques that will result in their ability to more sufficiently feed their families.



Chanto  
Food Security Program Manager



Homestead Garden Training mixing soil in Kbal Krapeu



Mean Chey cucumber

**DONATE NOW**

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

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

# Education Program

## *Children are Benefiting from Improved Learning Environments*

We are proud to report that the Beng and Tapang primary schools will be completed by and inaugurations held in January, 2019! These school buildings replaced dilapidated, unsafe wooden buildings, and will serve up to 960 students, 480 students per school. We want to again, recognize the generous donors (Four Girls For Families, the British Schools Foundation, INTO Giving, the Soroptimists of Jackson Hole, and two private citizens who came to us through Abercrombie and Kent Philanthropy) who made these school projects a reality for those 960 students, and for students who will attend these schools for years to come.

Moreover, children are benefiting from improved learning environments through access to clean water. Access to better sanitation facilities at schools has improved attendance, especially for girls. If the school does not already have toilets, Trailblazer provides toilet facilities in addition to the school construction.



Tapang School Construction



Beng School Construction

## *We Met Our 2018 Goal of 100 Bicycles*

We are also very excited to report that we have met our 2018 goal of 100 bicycles, due to a generous contribution of another 50 bicycles made by a long-term individual donor. We can't express enough how grateful we are to donors who help us reach our goals, but more importantly, impact the lives of students by giving those students a means to continue their education, thus becoming the hope of their families for a better life.

**DONATE NOW**



Bike delivery to Beng students

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

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

# Economic Development Program

## *Farmers were Significantly More Successful after Training*

Throughout 2018, Trailblazer staff worked with a subgroup of 3 farmers of the Farmer Community Group [FCG] who agreed to grow vegetables we recommended. The staff also continued to provide technical advice to the remaining 22 farmers who are growing the produce they wish.

Staff collected data on the production, income and expenses for the years of 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 for all 25 farmers. A comparison between the two years show that all 25 farmers were significantly more successful after Trailblazer's training and assistance, with an increase in income ranging on average from 56% to 200%.

The reasons for this exciting success, in addition to Trailblazer's involvement, are attributed to the following:

1. Vegetable productions increased because the FCG members had learned techniques to better manage and control their vegetable farms.
2. Drip irrigation systems and plastic mulches on their garden rows resulted in higher vegetable production, less crop disease, and easier care of their crops.
3. Vegetable prices in the market were good. People are focusing more on Organic vegetables, understanding they are safe, and know to buy organic vegetables from a FCG member.
4. FCG farmers know how to divide the grade their vegetables and package their vegetables properly before delivering them to the market. Using these techniques, they can get a different price on the same products. As an example with cucumbers: there are grades 1, 2 and 3. Grade 1 is the best shaped cucumber, grade 2 is smaller, grade 3 is smallest and has poor shape.
5. FCG farmers limit the use of Ministry of Agriculture approved-chemicals on their vegetables. Some farmers do not use any chemicals.

Due to this success, in 2019 we are considering the establishment of another FCG in another location to be determined through the government's community development integrated workshop process.



FCG Learning Tour of a Farmer's Market

**DONATE NOW**

Please visit our website for more information about our Economic Development Program:  
<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/economic-development-prog>

## Other News

### *Board Highlight*

We are pleased to welcome two new members to the Board of Directors: Elizabeth Keating and Justine Auton. We are thrilled to have these two ladies join the team. They bring additional skill sets, passion for Cambodia and Trailblazer's efforts, and fresh ideas. You can read more about them on our website.



After 20 years of teaching and consulting with nonprofits, Elizabeth "Liz" Keating has returned to the field, becoming the Finance Manager at Campus Child Care Inc., the recent merger of the six Harvard-affiliated childcare centers. She actively consults and conducts research on nonprofit organizations. Liz has taught accounting and finance courses for twenty-five years at Boston College, BU, Harvard, Northwestern, and NYU. She is an active board member of several nonprofits, including Microfinance Opportunities, Carry Me Home, Cambridge Cambodia School Project, Cambodian Living Arts, and Friends of Tilonia. I joined the

Board of Directors because I found the work of Trailblazer Foundation inspirational.

Justine Auton lives in Wellington, New Zealand and works in a senior management role in a government agency. She has a Master's degree in Public Management from Victoria University, Wellington and is committed to life-long learning. Justine became interested in Cambodia through wider travel experiences in Asia. An experience with bad water in Siem Reap had her resolved to try to do something positive to help. Justine is interested in learning more about community development in Cambodia, and how organizations like Trailblazer are making a practical and positive difference.



### *Additional News*

We have been working on giving Trailblazer's website a facelift. You can check out the new look of our website at [www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org](http://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org) Please note that during this transition, some previous web links may not redirect as yet, but keep trying!

For more information and to donate visit our website:

<https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org>



**Trailblazer Foundation**

---

PO Box 271767  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80527