



Developing ripples of sustainability through community development projects

Summer 2018 Newsletter

News on Trailblazer Foundation's activities during the past quarter

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(Cover Photo of a former Intern Sharlee Hughes through our partner IE3)

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A Word from the Executive Director



Hello Trailblazer Supporters,

Recently I had a conversation with a donor of many years who asked what type of funding Trailblazer needed most. My answer to her is an important enough insight into Trailblazer's inner workings that I wanted to share it with you as well.

As you know, Trailblazer has a United States and Cambodian component: Trailblazer Foundation and Trailblazer Angkor, respectively. Trailblazer Foundation establishes the programmatic focus, provides the overall operations, and conducts the fundraising. Trailblazer Angkor implements our programs in-country, which includes providing both products (water filters, wells, bicycles, etc.) and services (agriculture trainings, etc.) to our rural village partners.

Related to fundraising, long ago we decided to structure most of our fundraising efforts in the context of supporting our products and services. We did this because that is most people's preference, as it allows them to know their contribution went to a particular need in rural Cambodia. As such, the vast majority of the funds we receive for a particular product or service go through Trailblazer Foundation to Trailblazer Angkor. It is Trailblazer Angkor that makes it all happen on the ground in Cambodia's Siem Reap province, efforts highlighted throughout this newsletter.

Unfortunately, Trailblazer Foundation is only able to retain a very small percentage of those earmarked contributions, because we have priced our products and services at a level that is competitive, and what the market can bare. The limited funds Trailblazer Foundation does retain are not enough to cover all of the stateside and Cambodia operation's expenses (staff, transportation, supplies, fundraising, communications).

Trailblazer Foundation's funding model means that we need to secure other "general support" funds to cover the gap in funding for all our operations. Truth be known, this has always been Trailblazer Foundation's greatest challenge – securing funds that are not earmarked for our products and services.

We are both proud of our ability to raise funds for the work we do in Cambodia, and grateful for all those who support that work through their contributions to our products and services. However, as you now know and understand, we need more general support funding to make Trailblazer successful. Said another way, the true cost of running Trailblazer, both Trailblazer Foundation and Trailblazer Angkor, requires that we secure more general support.

Each year, the Cambodian communities we partner with present Trailblazer with a long list of needs. And each year we strategize how best to meet as many of those needs as we reasonably can. The growth and effectiveness of our work depends on having a solid base of both earmarked funding and general support funding. Investing in our operations and infrastructure is a necessary, even critical, part of the equation.

You have the power to be an agent of healing and hope for rural villagers. Whether you make a donation toward a product or service, or you choose to contribute toward our overall mission through a general support gift, your contribution is making a difference. You are playing a lead role in transforming the lives of people in rural Cambodia every year.

I want to thank you for your continued support. Our passion for improving health conditions and reducing poverty for our rural village partners cannot happen without your help.

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Coats".

Chris Coats
Co-Founder and Executive Director

Health Program

Improving Health Conditions

In the news, we regularly hear about poverty and need across the globe, of people struggling and living with hunger and disease. In Siem Reap Province, the second poorest province in Cambodia, Trailblazer is providing rural villagers with healthy water through our filters, an abundant consistent supply of water from our wells, and better sanitation with latrines.

It all starts with water. There is little dispute amongst the Trailblazer Board, staff and recipients that when we provide clean potable water their families are healthier and have more energy. Adults are better able to work and provide for their families. Children can attend school and continue their education. Additionally, when villagers have a well, they can establish bigger and better homestead gardens to provide them with improved nutrition. Better health and more productive gardens means rural villagers can obtain increased “food security,” our second program in our comprehensive development strategy.

In the first half of 2018, Trailblazer has improved health conditions and directly benefitted:

- ◆ 965 people by installing 193 bio-sand water filters
- ◆ 265 people by drilling 53 wells
- ◆ 115 people by conducting 23 sanitation and hygiene trainings

You can help us accomplish similar results in the second half of 2018 with products and services:

- ◆ You can provide up to 15 individuals with a bio-sand water filter for clean drinkable water with a donation of \$80
- ◆ You can provide one to three families with a well for enough water to irrigate a homestead garden, and to improve the families’ sanitation and hygiene with a donation of \$320
- ◆ You can provide a family with a safe, comfortable, and sanitary place to relieve themselves with a donation of \$175.



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

<https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/our-health-1.html>

Food Security Program

Fostering Healthy Families

Having a well serves two purposes: improves health conditions - as described on the previous page; and improves food security by providing a consistent supply of water to irrigate homestead gardens. To help our village partners be more successful in feeding their families, Trailblazer offers agricultural trainings in horticulture, soil management, composting, earthworms, and organic pesticides and fertilizers. Through these trainings, farmers learn better techniques and management practices for growing a sufficient year-round food supply and to better feed their families.

So far in 2018, Trailblazer staff have:

- ◆ benefitted 2,250 people by conducting 45 agriculture trainings on homestead gardens
- ◆ benefitted 150 people by consulting with Farmer Community Group members to assist and monitor their progress and success

You can help make the next half of the year have as much success by supporting a farmer to get training! Agriculture trainings cost \$50 per farmer for them to be able to attend a training. This cost covers the materials needed to conduct the training, staff time, transportation, per diem paid to the farmers to compensate for their loss of working otherwise, and a startup kit that is provided to each farmer at the conclusion of training.



Farmers receiving training on making compost



DONATE NOW



Trailblazer Agriculture Supervisor with a Farmer Community Group member monitoring her garden

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

<https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/food-security.html>

Education Program

Construction Has Begun and More Students Are Biking To School

We are pleased to report that we have begun the construction of both school projects in Trailblazer's 2018 Education program. Each school we are building will have six classrooms that can accommodate 480 children (40 students per classroom, with two sessions a day) per school. Both school buildings will be made of concrete and replace dilapidated, unsafe, wooden buildings.

The first project, which began in May, is a new primary school building in Beng village which is located one and one-half hour drive from Siem Reap city. Students from 327 families will attend this school.

The second project, which began in July, is a new primary school building in Tapang village, one of the poorest villages in the commune, and is located within a one hour drive from Siem Reap city. Students who attend this school come from five surrounding villages.

The majority of the funding for these two schools has come from a variety of sources: Four Girls For Families, the British Schools Foundation, INTO Giving, the Soroptimists of Jackson Hole, and a private citizen who came to us through Abercrombie and Kent Philanthropy. We are deeply humbled by the commitment of these donors who are generously supporting the education of rural students in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia.



Support beams being made

DONATE NOW



Worker making walls on the school

As you may remember, there are two parts to our Education Program: building schools and providing bicycles so students can continue school. Additionally, Trailblazer distributed 50 bicycles (1/2 our goal) to students going into the secondary level of school. Now these students have a means of travel to and from school and are able to continue their education. We thank INTO Giving, a United Kingdom-based organization, for their generous contribution that made this bicycle delivery possible.



Students gathered around the bicycles



Students receiving their bicycles

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

<https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/education.html>

Economic Development Program

Micro-Loans To Villagers

According to an Asia Development Bank study, more than 70% of Cambodians still live on less than \$3USD per day. Back in 2005, Trailblazer established the Village Fund concept as part of our Economic Development program. The purpose of a Village Fund is to ensure the recipient is vested in and participates in the project. The Village Fund is a microfinance tool which is active in multiple villages within Siem Reap Province where Trailblazer works.



Neang with two of her seven children

The Village Fund consists of money collected from villagers who receive products (such as water filters, wells, bicycles) or services (agriculture training) from Trailblazer. The funds are used to provide micro-loans to villagers for starting a small business, buying seeds, livestock, or paying for a hospital visit. The Village Fund creates a less stressful mechanism for borrowing money and works locally to strengthen and develop the community.

Effective loans help real people. For example: one village recipient, Neang, borrowed from her Village Fund to feed her family and improve her garden. Neang's husband, the sole income provider for the family, had left. His disappearance resulted in Neang struggling to keep her seven children fed. She reported her children were much happier that she received a Village Fund loan because they could eat regularly and stay active in school and at home.

Neang was thankful for the Village Fund because it was an easier borrowing system than a larger lending institution that requires numerous documents and has constraining bureaucratic rules. Without the Village Fund, Neang feared her loan request may have been rejected by the bank and her children would not get the food and nutrients they needed in order to succeed. She thanked Trailblazer profusely for helping establish the Village Fund in her village and being able to borrow money from it.



Trailblazer staff training the village chief on the Village Fund

DONATE NOW

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

<https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/economic-development.html>

Other News

Partners Help Maximize Trailblazer's Reach

Trailblazer is excited by the fact of receiving more funding from two relatively new sources of income: online and businesses.

Online donations have increased over the years because they make giving simple, fast and easy. There is also a growing interest by businesses wishing to give back to a place where they partner, or because they care about Cambodia and want to help by supporting Trailblazer's efforts. You can see a list of our business partners here: <https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/partners-1.html>

Fundraising is time-consuming and challenging. At the same time, we are thrilled about all the ways of raising money through these partnerships, which are an effective way to increase Trailblazer's reach to new audiences. We deeply appreciate these partners' interest and contributions in helping Trailblazer bring rural villagers out of mere survival to more sustainable livelihoods. If you know of other donation sites or business opportunities we should be considering, please let us know. We would be happy to contact them to see if they would be interested in supporting our work. It takes a village, right?

We are also excited to announce that we have launched a new Peer-to-Peer campaign program. A strategy where our supporters can aid us in extending our reach and help raise funds. The Peer to Peer program is designed where one can choose from a variety of projects to support. We have set it up for you by creating simple "plug and play" templates to get you started. To make supporters feel more comfortable in giving, we have strategically chosen campaign levels of \$200-\$500. You know more people to invite than we do, and to enlist your help through this resource would be amazing. We hope you will help spread the love!



HELP RURAL CAMBODIANS TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES FROM SURVIVAL TO SUSTAINABILITY

When you create a personal fundraiser page today for TRAILBLAZER FOUNDATION'S general support, you'll help improve health, food security, education, and economic development in rural Cambodia, in ways that are self-sustaining by the individuals and communities we serve.

General support provides the greatest flexibility in making sure our work is accomplished effectively, and core mission support is protected with all expenses being covered.

Start Fundraising

You can view the template options at this link:

<https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/become-a-fundraiser.html>

For more information and to donate visit our website:
<https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/donate2.html>

DONATE NOW



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