



Summer 2020 Newsletter

*News from Trailblazer Foundation—
Around the world the virus has taken its toll ...*



Chikeak, Knapor, Soutr Nikum

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note from the Executive Director	Page 2
Health Program – The Impact of Better Sanitation	Page 3
Food Security Program – More Food Production from the Local Market	Page 4
Education Program – Students are Waiting to Receive Bicycles & Uniforms	Page 5
Economic Development Program – Second Farmers Community Group	Page 6
Testimonial	Page 7
Additional News – Short Survey/Facebook Group/Stocks	Page 8
How You Can Help—Despite Covid-19 - You Still Can Make a Difference	Page 9

Developing Ripples of Sustainability through Community Water Projects

A Note From Trailblazer's Executive Director



Hello Trailblazers,

I hope you and yours are staying safe from the Covid-19 virus and are healthy. In Cambodia the number of positive cases have been relatively low [197 as of July 21] in comparison with other countries. All the cases, sadly, were brought into the country by travelers. The government remains diligent in their efforts to minimize the spread of the virus to locals and tourists, requiring everyone to follow the Ministry of Health instructions for safety and quarantining arriving passengers for 14 days.

Around the world the virus has taken its toll in a myriad of ways, and for the people of Cambodia - the 4th poorest country in SE Asia - it is no different. Families are needing money, food and loan repayment support. Between January and April, the average household saw a 40% decrease in income, in a country where per capita income is \$1,230. Tourism was down nearly 60% through May. Tourism is the third largest sector of the economy, after agriculture and the garment industry. During the pandemic more than 250 garment factories suspended operations, impacting the employment of 130,000 workers. The government established a fund to support poor families during Covid-19. Depending on family size, some families received \$100 per month. But the number of registered poor families continues to grow, having reached 610,000 in July. Although the budget in this fund grew to \$28 million, the government will not be able to help forever.

This makes the work Trailblazer does for the Cambodian people all the more crucial. Helping families improve their health and living conditions at the basic level. Providing access to water, clean drinking water and better sanitation illness and disease is reduced. Through agriculture training farmers learn how to better feed their families and can be less dependent on buying food from the market. And, despite the virus, our work has continued and will continue.

With all the virtual living and self-isolation, the way we can connect with others is very different. Perhaps you have been feeling the desire to reach out and help others, but are wondering just how you can do that when you must be careful to not expose yourself or others. I feel very blessed that the virus has not seriously impacted me or my family personally, but there are thousands across our world and in Cambodia who have not been so fortunate.

During this especially difficult time, we hope you will make a gift to help poor Cambodian families who are struggling through these challenges with few resources available to them. You can make a difference, right from your own home, to help others in need. You can donate in honor or memory of someone special. Please use the enclosed envelope to send a check or process a credit card payment, or you can use the DONATE button on our website to make your donation.

Thank you so much for your continued interest and support in our cause.

With deepest gratitude,

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

Chris Coats
Co-Founder and Executive Director

Health Program

The Impact of Better Sanitation

In 2018, Trailblazer installed 50 latrines in Prom Kod village, Ballangk commune, Prasat Bakong district, Siem Reap Province. The latrine beneficiary families all held poor Identity Cards, a recognition by the government of their poverty level, and were selected by their village committee. Trailblazer was informed of the need for latrines for these identified families. Our initial step in the process is for our Health Program team to conduct Hygiene and Latrine Using Training with these families.

Among the 50 beneficiary families, Mr. Hong, along with his wife and 7 children received a latrine. The Trailblazer team met with Hong to do a short interview with him. One of the questions asked by Trailblazer staff was, "Where do you and your kids defecate every day?" Mr. Hong replied, "We walk past the field to go to the bushes outside the village. It's about a 600-700 meters walk from our house, and it's even harder at night. I was very worried about my girls when they went to the bushes, and I would accompany them."



DONATE NOW

Mr. Hong continued, "At that time, all of us were in good health, but sometimes we got sick. We don't know why. After receiving the latrine and the Hygiene Training from Trailblazer, we learned that we were sick because we didn't know how to clean our hands after defecation." He added, "After receiving the latrine, my family no longer walks to the bushes. We feel more comfortable and safe to have the latrine at home. We can save money on medicine." Finally, Mr. Hong thanks Trailblazer for giving a latrine to his family and for the knowledge and importance of body hygiene.

Latrine - training Anlong Pi village



With just \$175 USD donation, you can provide a family like Mr. Hong's with a safe, dignified, private place to go to the toilet, and give them better health and ultimately improved livelihoods because of better sanitation.

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

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

Food Security Program

More Food Production from the Local Market

Trailblazer's Food Security program is going strong, despite the virus. However, farmers need water pump wells to irrigate homestead gardens and water livestock. During this Covid-19 period, the Ministry of Agriculture announced a ban on importing pigs and some vegetables from Vietnam. People are now focused on food productions like raising chickens and maintaining farms of fish, frogs, eels, or crawfish, plus homestead gardening. In Siem Reap, more local restaurants are reopened and consuming more food production from the local market. This ban of imported foods gives local farmers more income earning opportunities to meet the demand by growing produce or livestock beyond what is needed to feed their families, and selling it at their local market.

In addition to the horticulture and composting training, Trailblazer has also been conducting chicken raising training courses this year, with a total of 38 courses as the annual goal. With a \$50 investment in a farmer, you can provide him/her with one of our various training courses which will help them to be more productive and successful in not only feeding her/his family, but also earning more money than was possible before. It may seem a rather small contribution, but it is one that will reap big rewards.



Horticulture and Composting training



DONATE NOW

<— Chicken raising training



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

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

Education Program

Students are Waiting to Receive Bicycles and Uniforms

The government of Cambodia had announced nationwide school closures in March 2020. Students who had the technology have been schooling online, but distance learning initiatives had mixed results, particularly in the countryside because of the lack of resources. It is not yet clear when Cambodia will reopen the public schools in the country. There are rural students anxiously waiting to receive a bicycle and/or uniform when schools reopen and to be able to continue their education.

In a July 22, 2020 news report, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport will allow the opening of 20 high-safety-standard private schools in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Battambang in August. The schools must follow guidelines laid down by the ministries of Education, Health, and the World Health Organisation. Parents and/or guardians of students have to sign an agreement on the ministry's safety standards before sending their children to school. The schools that do reopen must organise social distancing on campuses, in buildings and in the classrooms. Schools that fail to honor the agreement will be ordered to close.

With the great success Trailblazer had in the November 2019 and May 2020 GivingTuesday campaigns, added to private donor support, a matching contribution from Mr. Jankovitz, and a \$300 grant from the DKG Chapter, Chi in Jackson, WY, Trailblazer secured the funding to purchase 45 bicycles and 109 school uniforms. We wish to thank everyone who participated in those two campaigns and who contributed privately to make these funding goals possible.

Having missed months of education it will be even more important to help promote the continued education of rural Cambodian students. One way to break the cycle of poverty, especially on a generational level, is to ensure that children have the opportunity to go to school. You can help this effort with a \$55 donation to provide a deserving student waiting to have their own bicycle, and/or \$15 to purchase a much needed school uniform.

DONATE NOW



Bicycle Delivery

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

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

Economic Development Program

DONATE NOW

Establishing a Second Farmer Community Group

With the great success of our first Farmer Community Group in Meanchey, Trailblazer has been working to establish a second Farmer Community Group [FCG] in Puok District. Here are photos of our local director, Mr. Ratanak, and our agriculture specialist, Mr. Chanto, interviewing a potential member of the new FCG.



This type of project is intended to increase the economic status for the FCG members and their families, and improve the food security and general health conditions of the community as a whole through consumption of the FCG's quality organic produce. Good health is fundamental to helping break the cycle of poverty and building more sustainable livelihoods. Since the inception of the first FCG, because of the training provided by Trailblazer, the participating farmer members netted an average income increase of 150%.

Another aspect of our Economic Development program is our Village Funds. One of the greatest challenges to economic development is access to capital, even small amounts of funding. For each product we deliver, we require the recipients to "put some skin in the game." Specifically, we ask them to pay a small fee, as an investment into the development of their family. Trailblazer does not keep this money. Instead, we direct our constituents to put their contribution into their local Village Fund – an innovative approach to microfinance that enables villagers to get the capital they need to start or grow a business, buy livestock, seeds or fertilizers for their crops, secure medical care, or purchase a motorbike or bicycle so they can have better access to work and school. These funds are village-owned and managed, built to foster economic development for the residents of that village. Trailblazer provides the money box, key and loan/savings book to track the loans, as well as ongoing training to the Finance Committee members of Village Funds who request further training, and help other villages establish new Village Funds each year.



Refresher course on current village fund.



New village fund established.

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

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

Testimonial

We like to recognize Trailblazer supporters, be they donors, partners or volunteers, and thank them for their participation in helping make Trailblazer what it is today. This testimonial is from Alice Bateman who shared her experience volunteering for Trailblazer in February 2020.



"I wanted to let you know about my incredible experience volunteering with the crew. I just returned from my sabbatical after 10 weeks in Vietnam and Cambodia. Trailblazer was one of the highlights of my travels!

The best part about my experience was really meeting the people, and specifically the crew at Trailblazer. Heng, Sambo, Mr. T were so wonderful and caring. While in Siem Reap, I stayed at a hostel and rented a bike for 2 weeks to get back and forth from the site. That was the best decision as I had the freedom to come and go, and while at the hostel I met so many interesting people. I found a lovely balance between putting in time at Trailblazer as well as meeting others and exploring Siem Reap on my own. The weeks at Trailblazer included physical labor, a deeper cultural understanding of Cambodia, and a window into the needs of people, especially in the rural areas of Siem Reap. My time included a steep learning curve, where I tried to find ways to be more helpful during my days. While I was at Trailblazer, Heng was the crew member I had the most contact with. He was leading the day to day operations of making the water filters. His brother Sambo was a huge help as well. Mr. T was also a steady and hardworking presence. His English was the most limited, but he was such a positive and calm soul, that he showed me how to do many of the tasks on the site. I thoroughly enjoyed working with these guys, and together, we were able to get a significant amount of work done each day.



Alice Bateman, volunteer

It was also a pleasure to meet Ratanak, the director. I approached him at the end of the first week to hopefully make an appointment when he and I could talk about the organization, and more specifically, the clean water needs of Cambodians. During this conversation, I mentioned that I was a teacher, upon which he quickly responded, "Then you need to teach the crew English." I am not an English teacher, and I said that I would feel more comfortable if that interest came from the crew themselves, rather than from him. He mentioned that the guys at Trailblazer would benefit from English instruction, and asked if I could give them an English lesson on Saturday (the next day) for 2.5 hours. He had a quick meeting with the team, and told me they agreed and would arrive in the morning to learn. Me and six of the guys practiced conversational English all morning. It was actually a very productive morning and a wonderful way to get to know them even more. We talked about family life, foods we like, work and commuting to work, and our personal interests. I was so endeared to this group of young men... they are awesome.

Getting out into the villages was a highlight, and I loved going to the rural areas to deliver the water filters! Heng was amazing. With each family, he was kind and professional as he took the time to train them about the biofiltration system. I enjoyed meeting the families and helping with setting up the water filter. Oftentimes, the family would want to just chat with us, and the children were always so curious about the western folks at their homes. On a few occasions, the families offered us food or a beverage which was so kind. Watching Heng do the training and Mr. T or Sambo assisted with setting up the biofiltration systems was awesome. The local chief accompanied us to each of the homes as well. The system of transporting and setting up the water filters is very smooth."

Please visit our website for more information about our Volunteer:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/volunteers-2>

Additional News



New Facebook Group Trailblazer Foundation Supporters

This group is for all of our Trailblazer supporters including former and current volunteers as a way to stay connected. We also invite those of you who are interested in becoming a volunteer to join this group, which can be used as a resource to inquire of other volunteers about their experience, lessons learned and tidbits of advice. Through this group you can promote

Trailblazer to others you know, share posts, encourage others to follow Trailblazer and create fundraisers. We hope this will be a platform that will help you stay in touch and involved.

www.facebook.com/groups/TrailblazerFoundation/

There May be a Tax Benefit for You Donate Stocks, Bonds and Mutual Funds

As a 501c3 your donations to Trailblazer Foundation may offer you tax benefits. We recommend you consult with your CPA or Tax Advisor prior to any gifting to make sure you know how it will impact your individual situation.

We are now able to receive donated stocks, bonds and mutual funds. To Donate Stocks, Bonds or Mutual Funds please contact Trailblazer, +1 (307) 399-2192 or info@thetrailblazerfoundation.org after you have consulted your CPA or Tax Advisor and we'll provide you with the steps to follow to complete your request.

A Short Survey

Trailblazer is working on updating our donor database. As always, the information is kept confidential. We will use the updated information to update your profile with the best way to contact you and any preferences you wish us to know about. Please complete the survey enclosed and return it in the envelope provided. Or you may go to our website to complete the survey. We greatly appreciate your participation in this survey so we can continue to provide you with our newsletters, donation receipts, and other information that may be of specific interest to you.

To complete our survey online:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6VTNXLH>

How You Can Help

Despite Covid-19 - You Still Can Make a Difference

Other issues that fill the news these days relate to racism and injustices between peoples. Sadly, these issues have been going on for a long time and are not region specific. In Trailblazer's early years, we once had a Cambodian man ask former Co-Founder, Scott Coats, "Why would a man with white skin want to come help a man with dark skin?" Scott thought for a moment and then replied by asking the man, "Do you have chickens?" The man said, "Yes." Scott then asked, "Do they lay white eggs, and brown eggs?" The man said, "Yes, and yes." Scott then asked, "And when you crack them open, what do they look like inside?" The man smiled, nodded and said, "The same."

It makes me, personally, feel good that Trailblazer's work does not discriminate against color, economic status, or location. The work Trailblazer does is life changing, rewarding and gratifying. You have and can continue to participate in making even more of an impact without even leaving the safety of your home.

As a brief reminder of how your gift(s) can be part of changing a family's life, please see the list below. Every dollar adds up and really does help.

- \$15 buys a school uniform
- \$50 supports a rural farmer's agriculture training course
- \$55 buys a bicycle to keep a student in school
- \$80 buys a bio-sand water filter for up to 3 families
- \$175 buys a latrine for a family
- \$320 buys a well for up to 3 families
- \$_____ to help out as much as possible where needed most"

DONATE NOW

Do you have a Donor Advised Fund?

We have learned about a chance for your funding to have a bigger impact than ever through the #HalfMyDAF matching-grant challenge. If you make a grant to Trailblazer Foundation and commit to putting half your DAF to work by September 30, you give us the chance to get a matching grant of up to \$25,000. The more people who nominate our organization, the better our chances.

There is over \$120 billion sitting unused in Donor Advised Funds and community foundations across the country. The #HalfMyDAF challenge aims to put these charitable dollars to work now, when and where it's needed most.

We'd love you to consider a donation to help us continue to improve the lives and health of rural Cambodians.

You can learn more about the #HalfMyDAF challenge at halfmydaf.com.

To Donate

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

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

Please visit our website for ways you can support Trailblazer Foundation:

<https://thetrailblazerfoundation.org/other-ways-to-giving>



Trailblazer Foundation

PO Box 271767
Fort Collins, Colorado 80527