

FWC funds so many important programs in Cambodia

## This small rural hospital will solve a multitude of problems

### Your donation will help complete the construction

Medical care is sorely lacking in rural Cambodia. Many rural people needing medical treatment never receive it because they cannot afford the cost of traveling 2 - 12 hours to get to the hospital or pay the doctor's fee.

Eighty percent of Cambodia's population is rural. The majority are subsistence farmers who attempt to grow enough food to feed their families. They earn very little cash and usually do not have savings.

If they have a medical crisis and want to go to the hospital, they have to borrow money from private lenders and pay back double what they borrow. In order to do that, they often have to sell their farmland and sometimes their house. Many of these families end up in urban slums.

Therefore, many people never seek medical help. There are people who broke legs and never had them set and are now crippled. There are young mothers whose babies did not receive a safe birth and either died or have cerebral palsy. Many children never received vaccinations and got polio. There are elders who never get help with a multitude of ailments including some who have gone blind from cataracts.

The non-profit organization OEDDO is building a 24-bed hospital in rural Kampot Province that will provide surgery and attend to urgent care needs like broken bones. There will be a birthing center so mothers and babies receive good care. If the patient has a special medical need that would be better served in Phnom Penh, they will arrange to have that person transported to the best hospital to serve their needs.

The building is under construction. It has two wings, one for patient rooms and the other for the doctors' offices, x-ray, and operating room. The cost for the building is around \$80,000. Please consider making a donation.

### The hospital's medical team

Nine young adults who grew up at the OEDDO Center or were helped by it and are currently studying medicine or recently graduated. Among the nine, there are two medical doctors (specializing in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics), three nurses, three pharmacists, and one specializing in medical laboratory science and public health. They all want to work at the new hospital.



*Left to right: Hov -MD Internal Medicine, Huy - BS in Laboratory Science & Masters in Public Health, Muoy - MD Pediatrics, Rathana & Lyly - Nurses. All grew up at the OEDDO Center.*

### Who is OEDDO?

Orphans, Elders, and Disabled Development Organization is a small local NGO that responds to people in crisis in their rural community in Kampot Province. The organization is very heart-centered, creative, and cost-effective. Friendship with Cambodia supports their programs.

The founder, Vanna, was a poor rural farmer. Her initial response when she saw so many children orphaned from AIDS was to take them into her home and raise them along with her own four children. She took in 12 orphaned children. Later, with funding from the USA, she started the OEDDO Center in 2003.



*Vanna, Founder of OEDDO*

Currently, she is raising 43 orphaned children and caring for many destitute people including elders, the disabled, and families in crisis. Her adult son, Hieng, who has an MBA, helps her manage the programs.



## Our 2020 University Graduates

We are so proud of our students. Here is another group of hardworking youth who succeeded in university and now have jobs in their field. Many thanks to their kind sponsors. The graduates pay it forward by supporting other disadvantaged youth in school, usually their relatives.



### Mean Sorya - Social Work

She was hired by the NGO Cambodian Organization for Children and Development. She is supporting her niece and nephew in school.



### Pat Saram - Social Work

She was hired as a case manager at the NGO Hagar. In the future, she would like to start an NGO in her own community to help vulnerable people there. She is supporting her niece and nephew in school.



### Morm Rina - Accounting

She was ranked fourth out of 40 students in her class. She has a job with an accounting firm and is supporting her sister in university.



### Oeurn Srey Yiek - Agronomy

She did such a good job writing her thesis that her university printed it for future reference. She manages an organic food store and is planning to start an organic vegetable farm. She wants to support her cousin in university.



### Son Dem-Electrical Engineering

A company hired him as an engineer before he even graduated. He is supporting his brother in university.



### Rom Bunna - Social Work

She is working for Cambodia Indigenous Youth Association promoting indigenous rights in communities. She plans to support her sister in university.

## Friendship with Cambodia's Programs

### Education for Poor Rural Youth

We are supporting 44 students to attend university in Cambodia (35 girls and 9 boys). We give them career counseling, financial support, housing, health care, English and computer classes, confidence building, and help them get internships and jobs.

### Empowerment of Women

We are supporting the training of rural women as community leaders and support a Women's Network. We provide technical support to Women's Self-Help and Savings Groups and fund four groups. Through these four groups, 564 poor rural women are improving their lives through economic empowerment.

### Healing for Survivors of Trafficking and Gender Violence

We support a Women's Shelter for girls and women who were sex-trafficked, raped, or beaten by their husbands. The shelter accommodates 60 women and girls and is run by our partner organization, the Cambodian Women's Crisis Center. They provide shelter, counseling, life-skills training, literacy, English classes, legal assistance, and vocational training.

### Supporting a Center that Helps the Most Vulnerable

Through OEDDO (Orphans, Elders, & Disabled Development Organization), we are providing monthly support (food and medical care) to 24 disabled children and elders as well as help for families in crisis. We are supporting the construction of a rural hospital and library. We are also sponsoring four students in university including a pediatrician, a dentist, and two pharmacists.

### Friendship with Cambodia

PO Box 5231, Eugene, OR 97405  
(The new team did not take over management, Bhavia Wagner is still the Executive Director)

Founded in 2003 as a non-profit organization to provide humanitarian aid to Cambodia.

[www.friendshipwithcambodia.org](http://www.friendshipwithcambodia.org)  
[friendshipwithcambodia@gmail.com](mailto:friendshipwithcambodia@gmail.com)

**Please support our programs.** Tax-deductible.

## How is Cambodia during COVID-19?

Cambodia has one of the lowest rates of COVID-19 infections in the world. The number of cases in 2020 was under 500 for the entire country. However, since February 2021 the number of cases is now over 3000.

The government maintains tight controls. Initially, the borders were closed and flights into the country were very limited. When flights opened up, there was extensive testing, tracing, and quarantining.

As in other parts of the world, COVID has had a very detrimental impact on students and education.

Our university students studied on-line from March through October. This was very difficult for them. Most were living with their families in rural areas where there is no internet service. They had to use their phones to connect to their classes. Many students said it was frustrating because sometimes they would lose the connection or could not connect at all.



*FWC provided unemployed families with rice, eggs, canned fish, cooking oil, fish sauce, and soy sauce.*

*Thank you for helping them!*

Some students moved back to Phnom Penh, so they could keep up with their studies. In November, classes resumed on campus, but every few weeks there was another COVID outbreak in Phnom Penh and the university campuses closed and students had to study online again.

The Cambodian economy has been hit extremely hard. The largest employer, the garment industry, has been reduced by half, laying off hundreds of thousands of workers.

The second largest employer is the tourist industry which has been reduced to almost nothing. Other jobs have experienced decreases including drivers, cleaners, and restaurant workers.

Friendship with Cambodia provided over \$12,000 in emergency food to 414 families (including over 1000 children) who had lost their income. This was a big help to them and greatly appreciated. The government has now stepped in and is giving assistance to most of the poorest families.

## Climate Change is Devastating in Cambodia - One Solution is Surprising

Cambodia is experiencing extreme weather as the result of global warming. It has become increasingly difficult to farm. Each rural family owns a small plot of land for growing rice, the food they eat everyday. They depend on the weather for just enough rain at just the right time to grow their crop.

In recent years, it has become very common to have either droughts or floods. Last year the rice seedlings were washed away, so the crop had to be re-planted. Then it washed away again and had to be re-planted. Then heavy rains began again before the rice was ready to harvest, forcing farmers to harvest early. It was another bad year.

Many of our students tell us that their parents have given up on farming. When you go to a rural village, now it is common to see mostly grandparents and children. The middle-aged adults have moved away looking for work. Climate change is destroying families.

Some people go to Phnom Penh to do heavy day labor at construction sites. Many go to Thailand, Malaysia, or China to look for work. It usually is a terrible experience. They are often taken advantage of because they do not speak the language or have the correct paperwork. They may be promised wages they never receive, or physically or sexually abused. Their intention was to send money home to feed their children but usually that does not happen. A year or more may pass and they are never heard from.

Meanwhile, the grandparents really struggle to raise their

grandchildren. They are elderly and not able to grow rice. Friendship with Cambodia is supporting some of these families.

Friendship with Cambodia teaches our university students about climate change and pre-COVID we organized an annual tree planting field trip for them.

A new film called **2040** is a documentary on climate change that says a better future is possible if we embrace the best climate solutions available today. The film covers solar-powered microgrids, localized economies, electric self-driving cars, urban food farms, regenerative agriculture, marine permaculture, resource awareness, and (most surprisingly) increased educational opportunities for girls.

Education for girls is beneficial because when girls are educated they marry later, have children later, and have fewer children. We have seen that is true. Our university students marry five to ten years later than their peers and usually have two instead of four or five children. This eases the population pressure on the planet.



*Parents migrate & grandparents have to raise their grandchildren.*

## Women's Shelter Helps Survivors Recover

Fifty-seven survivors of gender violence including 20 survivors of sex-trafficking (youth), 21 survivors of rape (children), and 14 survivors of domestic violence (women) were recently supported in their recovery at the shelter that Friendship with Cambodia funds.

The survivors' relatives, either parents or children, live with them at the shelter. The program helps clients recover from trauma, mental distress, and feelings of shame.

Individual counseling sessions help the survivors rebuild their self-confidence and self-esteem so they can make their own decisions and move forward in life.



*Child survivor receives counseling*

Group counseling sessions are conducted twice a week. Clients share their life experiences and get to know each other. They feel close, like family.

Life skill classes include literacy, human rights, gender, health care, and hygiene. Vocational skill training enables clients to become economically independent. Clients can learn sewing, souvenir making, baking, barista, and/or food catering.

The NGO that runs the shelter, Cambodian Women's Crisis Center, also works for stronger gender-based violence laws and enforcement.



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## Women's Group Improved Phalla's Life

Ouk Phalla is a widow with three children ages 8, 12 and 15. She is a member of one of our Women's Self-Help and Savings Groups. Phalla attended trainings on financial management, parenting, life skills, and report writing.

As a result, she can more effectively manage her life and is now helping her community. These are great accomplishments because traditional Cambodian society represses women.

Each year, Phalla needs to hire help to do the heavy work on her rice farm. This costs a lot. Now Phalla knows how to

save money to cover this expense.

She grows vegetables to earn money and improve her family's nutrition. She plants gourds (bitter, sponge, and ridge) watermelon, sweet potato, papaya, long beans, and leafy greens.

Phalla has become very active in her community and in environmental protection. She helps with tree planting and patrolling the community forest.

The Women's Group taught her about raising children. Phalla's children are well-behaved and when they get home from



school, they help her with housework and gardening. In the future, Phalla wants her children to graduate from university and get jobs that serve the community and society.