

20th Anniversary Edition

\$2.25 Million in Humanitarian Aid for Cambodia

When I first arrived in Cambodia in 1991, there was very little traffic. In fact, there were almost no cars, just some cargo trucks. It had been twelve years since the genocide ended, but the recovery was very slow due to an economic embargo against Cambodia by all Western countries. At that time, Cambodia was controlled by Vietnam, which was still considered an enemy in the Cold War.

I could see that Cambodians were in shock and psychologically shattered by the genocide. Tragically, the embargo blocked humanitarian aid from the West. There were only a few Cambodian NGOs. I volunteered for one, helping disadvantaged women market their handicrafts.

In 1994, the United Nations organized a national election and international NGOs arrived bringing humanitarian aid. The problems facing Cambodia were enormous.



Since 2003, Friendship with Cambodia has responded to the progression of suffering in Cambodia, bringing relief to thousands of people. Our goal is to respond to the greatest needs and to empower people to help themselves. Our aid has evolved as the situation changed.

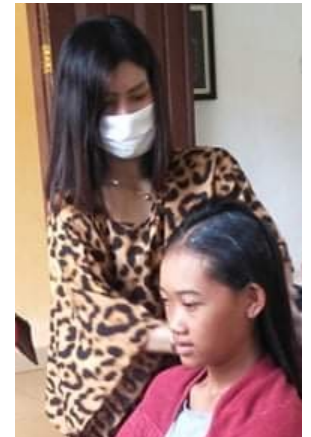
After 30 years of war and genocide finally ended in 1998, Cambodia was left with 4 to 6 million landmines. Innocent civilians were stepping on them everyday, losing limbs and their will to live. Friendship with Cambodia (FWC) helped over 5000 landmine survivors with prostheses, vocational training, and with whatever they needed, such as house repair, as they were ostracized and the poorest of the poor.

The AIDS crisis in Cambodia was the next tragedy which left many widows and orphans. We have helped hundreds of people and we supported AIDS education. AIDS is still a problem and we currently drive rural people with HIV/AIDS to the hospital to get their medication every month. We also provide social programs for them because they are shunned and isolated. We help the orphans. Our current dental student lost both his parents to AIDS.

Anyone who has been to Cambodia has seen children begging and living on the streets. Once tourists give money to those at-risk children, they will continue that occupation, and very

likely become drug addicts or victims of exploitation. FWC helped over 1000 homeless children get off the streets, live in our shelter, and either be reintegrated with family members or enrolled in vocational training.

FWC is a big fan of vocational training as a means of empowering people to help themselves, and we have trained hundreds of people in hair dressing, driving, metal working, culinary skills, electronics, mechanics, jewelry making, and sewing. We have supported fair-trade craft NGOs that employ the most vulnerable, including disabled people and widows with children. We've sold almost \$200,000 of their crafts.



Supporting local initiatives is a great form of aid and FWC gave hundreds of seed grants to help poor rural villages build schools, rice banks, fish ponds, bridges, houses, and wells. Hundreds of individuals were empowered with fishing boats, cows, motorbikes, and bicycles.

Recently, we helped build a much needed hospital in rural Kampot province, and we built two of the first rural libraries.

Whenever there was a huge widespread crisis, FWC provided emergency relief. First, food to flood victims. Later, food to families impacted by loss of work, income, and food due to COVID shut downs.

One of the latest tragedies is the large number of elders who lost all of their family members in the genocide and have no one to care for them in their final years as they become more frail. We are helping dozens of elders with food, medicine, and adequate shelter.

To ensure this important work continues for decades to come, we recently created a legacy fund at a community foundation called Education for Low-Income Rural Youth.

Please read on for more information about our current programs, including university education, empowering women, and helping survivors of sex-trafficking. With your support we continue to work to relieve suffering and bring hope, happiness, and empowerment to those in need in Cambodia. **Many thanks to our kind donors who make all this work possible.**

Bhavia Wagner, Executive Director/Founder of Friendship with Cambodia

Education for Low-Income Rural Youth Fund

Consider making it your legacy - to help future generations

Friendship with Cambodia is celebrating its 20th anniversary with the establishment of a fund that will enable us to continue our University Student Sponsorship Program indefinitely. This new fund empowers disadvantaged youth in Cambodia through higher education. It focuses on girls because education for girls is one of the most effective ways to end poverty.

A generous donor helped us establish the fund. We hope you will consider including this fund in your will or you may contribute anytime.

The interest from every \$50,000 in the fund supports one student in university for a year forever. Community foundations are obligated to administer these types of permanent funds according to the guidelines provided when the fund was established. See our website or contact us for more details. Thank you.

Creative Assistance to People Living Off a Garbage Dump

Rural areas in Cambodia are difficult places to live because there is no help available if you are a child and your parents die, you are sick or disabled, you lack food or employment, or you are elderly and have no family to care for you.

To address these problems, Friendship with Cambodia funds the NGO called Orphans, Elderly, and Disabled Development Organization (OEDDO), run by Vanna and her son Hieng. It is one of the most caring, creative, and effective NGOs we have ever seen.

To give you an idea of how they operate, I want to tell you the story of how we are helping people who live off a dump by picking through garbage to find something to sell.

Located in rural Kampot province, there are around 100 people, including 30 children, living off garbage. Hieng could see that these families lacked adequate food, shelter, health care, and education. But rather than impose our ideas of what these people need, he asked the most appropriate aid question: What do you want?

They wanted a well, because it is so difficult to carry water to where they live. So OEDDO built them a well. Next OEDDO wanted to empower them, so we provided rice so that everyone had enough food to eat and the children could go to school instead of working in the dump.

The real challenge was how to help them earn a better living. Hieng came up with the idea of buying them a brick making machine. It makes construction bricks from waste plastic using compression. These bricks are durable and commonly used in construction in Cambodia. A perfect solution!

Making and selling bricks will provide these families with more income and empower them to make ongoing improvements in their own lives.



Hieng gives the children a shower from the new well on a hot day

Friendship with Cambodia's Current Programs

Empowerment of Women

We are supporting the economic empowerment of rural women and training as community leaders. Last year, we provided support to Women's Self-Help and Savings Groups serving 614 poor rural women. We also empower rural youth through training about social problems, critical thinking, and leadership.

University Education

This year we are supporting 37 students from rural poverty to attend university (32 girls and 5 boys). We give them career counseling, financial support, housing, English and computer classes, build their self-confidence, and help with internships and jobs.

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 provides a safe loving home, counseling, trauma healing, life-skills training, literacy, English classes, legal assistance, and vocational training. Last year we helped 101 survivors, 93 were sex-trafficked including 3 children.

Helping the Most Vulnerable in Rural Cambodia

Through OEDDO (Orphans, Elderly & Disabled Development Organization) we provide food and medicine to widows with children, the disabled, and elders without family. We fund students in university, provide vocational training, offer English and computer classes to everyone in the community, and support a nurse at the new hospital. We recently built houses for people in crisis, bought a bus for students, and are shipping donated medical equipment.

Friendship with Cambodia

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Please support our programs. Tax-deductible.

Student Sponsorship Has Evolved

When we started our program 20 years ago, most children were dropping out of school by 6th grade. So we decided to support students to stay in school through high school.

After our first group of students graduated, many wanted to go to college. We were thrilled. A higher education leads to a good job and ends poverty for the extended family. So this became the focus of our program.

In exchange for funding their higher education, we ask all of the students to help others get an education. Most of our students start right away by providing nieces and nephews with school supplies and encouraging them to stay in school.

We always strive to improve our program. Instead of one big group community service project, this year we asked the students to come up with their own project ideas.

These are some of the service projects they did in their villages: awareness raising about hygiene and sanitation, education on how to protect children from dengue fever, menstruation care, and promotion of reading and distribution of storytelling books to children.

Our donors have supported 245 high school and university students. Soon we will have 167 university graduates.

They are doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, social workers, engineers, agriculturalists, accountants, IT and more. **The following are this year's university graduates.**



Ry Danouch: Social Work
She is working for an NGO, encouraging reading and writing to disadvantaged children.



Pok Kanha: Accounting
She recently gave a presentation to the other students about the problems of deforestation.



Houn Channy: Agronomy She would like to promote growing local vegetables to improve living conditions and to prevent migration out of the country.



Muong Sreyhorn: Accounting
She is working in accounting for a travel company. She would eventually like to work as a tax officer.



Chhong Channy: Accounting
Her volunteer project was teaching villagers how to protect children from dengue fever.



Chab Vathanak: Banking and Finance
He already has a job as credit officer at a micro-finance institution.



Lim Sela: Accounting
She has a fulltime job in accounting and would like to start her own business.



Chheang Yengsreylen: Social Work
She would like to work in the mental health sector.



Sal Pisey: Social Work
She would like to work with domestic adoptions, which is a new field of work in Cambodia.



Nget Sopheap: Public Administration
She is working in administration for an NGO that addresses rural poverty. She would eventually like to be a District Governor.

Empowering Women & Youth

Our Women's Self-Help and Savings Groups work with women who feel hopeless, beaten down by poverty. Participants learn how to create a better life for themselves by setting goals, earning income, and managing money.

With moral support from the other women in their group, they are successful and provide their children with better nutrition, education, and health care.

Over the past 20 years, we have helped thousands of women. Many were also

trained in community leadership and work to protect local forests from illegal destruction.

Preserving community forests is key to the economic well-being of rural families. Sustainable use of the forests provides food, building materials, and supplemental income. Corruption is the biggest threat in Cambodia. It results in forest destruction which also destroys families and livelihoods.

Migration of rural adults looking for work in other countries has increased from 1% to 20%. Sadly, these people are exploited and come back empty handed.



Last year they planted over 1000 trees

We also empower youth to become critical thinkers and to take action to help their communities.



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Young Women Trafficked to China

Yas and her two younger sisters were raised by their grandmother. They often didn't have enough food to eat and were too poor to go to school. Yas did intermittent day labor jobs to support the family. Someone from Vietnam friended her on Facebook and promised her a high paying job at a garment factory in China. They arranged for her to travel for five days to China.

Once in China, she was told she would have to learn Chinese before she could have that job. She was told she needed to marry a Chinese man (who paid a broker) or payback the money they spent on her transportation. She had no choice but to marry him because she had no money to pay them back or to travel home.

Four years later she got a job, but she had to spend all her savings on her own medical care. When she didn't produce a child, her husband's family treated her cruelly. She was afraid for her safety and went to the police. She was arrested for being undocumented and waited three months for the Cambodian government to approve her reintegration.

She was brought to our women's shelter in Phnom Penh where she received love, counseling, and vocational training, plus a year of follow-up support. This year, we helped 93 survivors of sex-trafficking, most were trafficked to China.

For the past 19 years, Friendship with Cambodia has helped survivors of sex-trafficking, rape (usually children), and women who were beaten by their husbands to recover from trauma, rebuild their self-confidence, and start a new life. And we support the creation and enforcement of laws to protect women.