



Peace Corps

PEACE CORPS CAMBODIA



Annual Report 2016

10th Anniversary
Edition



YEARS *of* SERVICE *and* FRIENDSHIP

benefiting the people of Cambodia and the United States



Since 2006
in Cambodia

Message from The Director



Susan Dwyer
*Country Director
Peace Corps Cambodia
Peace Corps Uganda Volunteer 1992-1994*

Dear friends and partners,

I am pleased to present this annual report of the United States Peace Corps 2016 activities in Cambodia. This year we celebrated 10 years in Cambodia. During this time, 502 volunteers have served in 17 provinces. Today we have over 110 Volunteers working side by side with local counterparts in 16 provinces to promote the Peace Corps' global mission of world peace and friendship. Aligned with the priorities of Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Health, Peace Corps Cambodia implements two programs: 1) English Teaching and Teacher Training and 2) Community Health Education. Through these programs and secondary projects, Volunteers have served over 100,000 people.

As we look back over the last year we are enormously grateful to our Royal Government of Cambodia partners at the commune, district, provincial and national levels, including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Interior for enabling and supporting Peace Corps' work. We are also thankful to the counterparts who make the Volunteers work possible and the homestay families who care so well for our Volunteers. The Kingdom of Wonder has been a welcoming home to nine generations of Peace Corps Volunteers. Due to our strong partnerships, we look forward to expanding our program into Kratie and Stung Treng in 2017.

I hope that you will enjoy reading about our shared accomplishments of the last year. These reflect not only the strength of the partnership, but also a terrific group of Volunteers who commit 27 months of their lives to the people of Cambodia through one of the United States' most treasured institutions. From 22-63 years of age, they represent the diversity of the US in terms of color, economic background, race and religion. In addition, they represent the idealistic values of a peaceful and prosperous world.

We look forward to a great year ahead. If you have any questions on this report or suggestions on how to enhance our impact, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susan Dwyer'.

Susan Dwyer
Country Director

Overview

Peace Corps sends the best and brightest Americans abroad on behalf of the United States to tackle the most pressing needs of people around the world. Volunteers work at the grassroots level to develop sustainable solutions that address challenges in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health, and youth development. Through their service, Volunteers gain a unique cultural understanding and a life-long commitment to service that positions them to succeed in today's global economy.

The agency traces its roots to 1960, when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country by living and working in some of the most remote corners of the world. He ignited a movement among young Americans that inspired the nation and led to the founding of the Peace Corps. In an ever-changing world, the agency has become a dynamic, forward-leaning champion for international service defined by its innovation and compassion—yet, its original mission remains the same:

THE PEACE CORPS MISSION

To promote world peace and friendship by fulfilling three goals:

- 1 To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained Volunteers.
- 2 To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- 3 To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.



President John F. Kennedy and Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver greet departing Tanganyika and Ghana Peace Corps Volunteers in the Oval Office.



John F. Kennedy greets volunteers on August 28, 1961

HISTORY

Officially established:	March 1, 1961
Americans who have served:	225,000
Host countries served to date:	141

PEACE CORPS TODAY

Peace Corps Director:	Carrie Hessler-Radelet (RPCV Western Samoa, 1981–83)
Host countries:	65
Volunteers and trainees:	7,213
Gender:	62% female, 38% male
Marital status:	95% single, 5% married
Minorities:	29% of Volunteers
Average age:	28
Volunteers over 50:	7% of Volunteers



Peace Corps Cambodia Staff

Peace Corps in Cambodia

The Royal Government of Cambodia invited Peace Corps to open a program in Cambodia in late 1992, and a country agreement was signed in 1994. However, the political situation was found to be too unstable for Volunteers to enter the country at that time. In 2004, talks about establishing Peace Corps Cambodia resumed, and Peace Corps welcomed the first group of Volunteers to Cambodia in 2007.

Individuals who serve as Peace Corps Volunteers are carefully selected through a competitive application process. Peace Corps Volunteers range in age from around 22 to 75, and represent diverse ethnic and minority groups. Most Peace Corps Volunteers hold university and/or advanced degrees. Volunteers come to Cambodia to contribute their skills and

knowledge to the development of the country through direct action at the local level. Upon arrival in Cambodia, Peace Corps Volunteers undergo extensive language, cultural, health, safety and technical training. Throughout their term of service, Peace Corps provides training opportunities to Volunteers and their co-teachers to improve their language and technical skills.

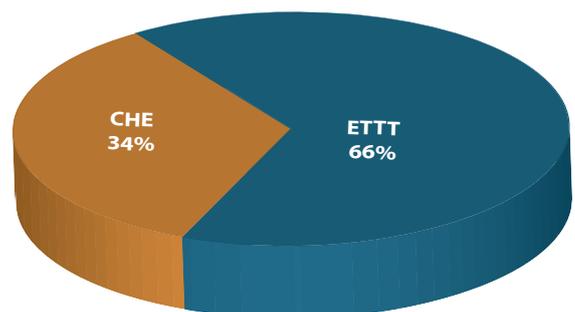
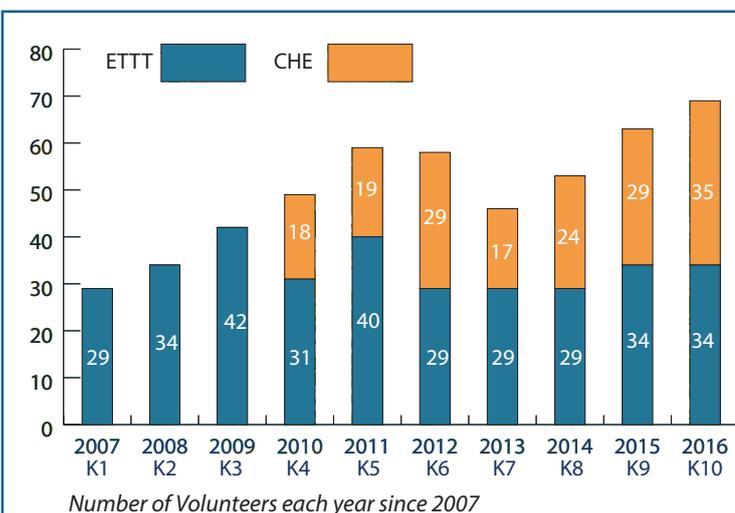
Volunteers live with Cambodian host families at a standard of living comparable to Cambodian citizens in their communities. They work side-by-side with Cambodian people to assist them in carrying out meaningful work towards a better future for their community and for Cambodia.

CURRENT PROJECTS



English Teaching and Teacher Training (ETTT)

Community Health Education (CHE)



Percentage of Volunteers in English Education vs. Health Education to date



Newly sworn-in Volunteer Group, K10, September 16, 2016

Our Volunteers Today

2016 Statistics

PCV Numbers 116 : Volunteers serve in 16 provinces

Projects 58 : English Teaching and Teacher Training
58 : Community Health Education

Gender 76 : female
40 : male

between 20 to 29 years old: **88%** **Age**
between 30 to 39 years old: **9%**
between 40 to 62 years old: **3%**

Our current Volunteers come from **U.S. States**
37 of the 50 United States.



◀ Community Health Education Volunteers gathering for their In-service Training at Peace Corps head office.

English Teaching and Teacher Training Volunteers gathering for their In-service Training at Peace Corps head office. ▶





Liz Ramirez teaches English at her class in Kampong Chhnang province.

English Teaching and Teacher Training

The English Teaching and Teacher Training Project has been cooperating with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Cambodia since 2007. The project has worked to develop the English language and critical thinking skills of Cambodian students, teachers and community members to help them gain access to personal, professional, and academic opportunities.

Volunteers teach at Upper and Lower Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Centers. As requested by the Ministry of Education, Volunteers co-teach

with a Cambodian national teacher. This practice benefits not only the students but also enhances the Cambodian teachers' language capacity and builds their technical classroom skills. By teaching alongside a Cambodian teacher, Volunteers can share modern teaching practices, help design and deliver lessons, build communicative English language skills and introduce effective classroom management techniques. Volunteers also develop and enhance teaching and learning resources for the classroom including introduction of new technologies.

Project Goals:

- ▲ Improve Teaching
- ▲ Increase Student Success

Project Activities:

- ▲ Co-teach with Cambodian counterparts in the classroom.
- ▲ Develop lesson plans and teaching materials that use the communicative approach to teaching English.
- ▲ Facilitate student activities and clubs.
- ▲ Develop libraries and resource centers.

Achievements in 2016

Goal 1: Improve Teaching

Teachers will improve their English proficiency and implement student centered teaching techniques.

Improve English Teacher's Instructional Practice



teachers increase their use of student-centered teaching techniques.



teachers introduced improved structures or routines to manage classroom interactions more effectively.



teachers increased their use of classroom-based assessments to monitor and inform student progress.



teachers increased their use of learning resources or classroom materials by creating, improving, or managing items such as lesson plans, posters, handouts, library books or other materials that support classroom learning.

Improve Teacher's English Communication Skills



teachers improved their English teaching methodology.



teachers conducted a higher proportion of their classes in English.



teachers increased their participation in teacher professional development activities in English.

Improve Teacher Trainee's English Teaching Skills



teacher trainees improve their English skills by at least 10% as measured by formal assessments.



teacher trainees create, improve, or manage items such as posters; handouts; lesson plans; or other materials that support classroom learning.



teacher trainees increased their use of gender equitable classroom practices.

Achievements in 2016

Goal 2: Increase Student Success

Students/youth will improve English language proficiency and develop leadership skills in the English classroom (formally and informally) or in extracurricular activities.

Improve Achievement and Participation in English Class

 **7,310**

students demonstrated improved English proficiency based on class content through formal or informal assessments.

 **5,313**

students demonstrated increased confidence or motivation by participation in a class, club, or camps.

Improve Leadership Skills

 **2,727**

students demonstrated leadership in or out of the classroom through activities like peer teaching, coaching, or homework help.

Expand Use of Library and/or Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Resources and Utilization

 **3,115**

students gained access to more reading materials or were better able to use and access electronic resources due to the creation or expansion of a school library or computer center.



Megan Boundy conducts English language training in Kampot province.



Matthew Thielker offers health care education in Kampot province.

Community Health Education

In 2009, at the request of the Ministry of Health, Peace Corps Cambodia expanded their activities by opening a Community Health Education project. The project's purpose is to assist Cambodian individuals and communities, particularly women and children,

to improve their overall health and well-being and increase their capacity to address health-related issues. Volunteers work with health center staff, Village Health Volunteers, and schools to build the capacity of people to address their health needs.

Project Goals:

- ▲ Maternal And Child Health.
- ▲ Healthy Behavior.

Project Activities:

- ▲ Conduct health education sessions at community health centers and through home visits.
- ▲ Promote positive nutrition practices through community and home gardens, cooking and feeding demonstrations.
- ▲ Promote ante/post natal checkups, immunizations, and family planning throughout the community.
- ▲ Educate community members on water and sanitation issues such as proper hand washing, diarrhea prevention and treatment, hydration and appropriate treatment and storage of drinking water.
- ▲ Engage individuals in activities such as group exercise, healthy cooking demonstrations, anti-smoking information, and drug and alcohol awareness campaigns.
- ▲ Educate community members on reproductive health.

Achievements in 2016

Goal 1: Maternal and Child Health

Community members will improve their knowledge and skills of, and adopt healthy behaviors for, maternal and child health in the areas of nutrition, water and sanitation, hygiene and ante-natal care.

Ante-Natal Care, Checkup and Delivery



6,060

women received health education messages on importance of antenatal care and post-natal checkup, immunization, family planning, and delivery services.



3,338

women are able to identify signs and symptoms indicating the need to seek immediate care during pregnancy.



1,229

pregnant women received 4 antenatal visits during last pregnancy.



857

community people were educated on modern contraceptive methods.

Water Sanitation Hygiene



7,802

community people can identify 3 or more critical times when they must wash their hands.



1,560

community people have been trained to purify and properly store drinking water.



255

community people are able to demonstrate how to correctly treat water.

Nutrition



3,454

caretakers identified one or more actions they can take to prevent malnutrition in their family.



7,588

people were trained in child health and nutrition.



5,055

children from 6-59 months old received a growth card and were weighed at least once over a 3 month period.



828

women are able to demonstrate how to prepare safe and nutrition weaning foods.



123

households trained by Volunteers reported increased access to fresh food at 6 months after establishing a garden.

Achievements in 2016

Goal 2: Healthy Behaviors

Community members will develop greater life skills and adopt healthy behavior.

Non-Communicable Disease

 **4,830**

people were educated on non-communicable diseases.

 **1,349**

people were educated on non-communicable disease risk factors related to tobacco use.

 **2,274**

people were able to identify ways to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine.

 **1,850**

people have been educated on harmful effects of alcohol and other substances.

 **4,406**

people were educated on healthy diets.

 **209**

exercise events were organized by Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts.



Paul Smith checks blood pressure for a local woman in Kampong Thom province.

10 YEARS at a GLANCE

1994



Country Agreement Signed

On October 3, 1994 in Washington, D.C., the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United States of America sign Country Agreement to start a Peace Corps program in Cambodia.

2006



Peace Corps

Office Opens

Peace Corps officially opens its office in Cambodia.



MoU with Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

Peace Corps Cambodia signs Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport on December 25, 2006, officially starting our English Teaching and Teacher Training Project.

2007



K1 First Group Swearing-in

The first group of 29 Education Volunteers swear in on April 2, 2007 and serve in:

- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampot
- Prey Veng
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo



Volunteers Meet the King

Peace Corps Volunteers and Country Director meet His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni at the Royal Palace.

2008



K2 Swearing-in

34 Education Volunteers swear in on October 4, 2008 and serve in:

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Kandal
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo

2009



K3 Swearing-in

42 Education Volunteers swear in on September 20, 2009 and serve in:

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Phnom Penh
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo

2010



K4 Swearing-in/ First Health Education Volunteers

49 Volunteers, 31 in Education and 18 in Health, swear in on September 23, 2010 and serve in:

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Speu
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Koh Kong
- Phnom Penh
- Preah Sihanouk
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo



MoU with Ministry of Health

Peace Corps Cambodia signs Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Health on May 25, 2010, officially starting our Community Health Education Project.

502

Volunteers have served in
17 of Cambodia's 25 provinces since 2007

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016



K5 Swearing-in

K6 Swearing-in

K7 Swearing-in

K8 Swearing-in

K9 Swearing-in

K10 Swearing-in

59 Volunteers, 40 in Education and 19 in Health, swear in on October 3, 2011 and serve in:

58 Volunteers, 29 in Education and 29 in Health, swear in on September 7, 2012 and serve in:

46 Volunteers, 29 in Education and 17 in Health, swear in on September 6, 2013 and serve in:

53 Volunteers, 29 in Education and 24 in Health, swear in on September 12, 2014 and serve in:

63 Volunteers, 34 in Education and 29 in Health, swear in on September 25, 2015 and serve in:

69 Volunteers, 34 in Education and 35 in Health, swear in on September 16, 2016 and serve in:

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Speu
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Kandal
- Koh Kong
- Phnom Penh
- Preah Sihanouk
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
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- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
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- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Speu
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Kandal
- Koh Kong
- Phnom Penh
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo
- Tbong Khmum

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Speu
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Koh Kong
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Siem Reap

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Speu
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Koh Kong
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo
- Tbong Khmum

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- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Speu
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Koh Kong
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo
- Tbong Khmum



Let Girls Learn Initiative

On March 21, 2015, First Lady of the United States of America Michelle Obama visited Peace Corps in Cambodia to kick-off the Let Girls Learn initiative.



Peace Corps
CAMBODIA



Michael Wasserman with student soccer players in Banteay Meanchey province.

Let Girls Learn Initiatives

The Peace Corps Let Girls Learn (LGL) Program aims to create an enabling environment for girls to access formal and informal education opportunities in the communities where we serve. Peace Corps Volunteers, who live and work at the grassroots level, work to increase community engagement in support of positive, gender-equitable norms that facilitate girls' education and full participation in economic and community life.

In 2016, LGL provided approximately \$120,000 in funding for 37 projects.



21,400

**Community members
(35% were girls)**

received an indirect benefit from the projects.



13,602

**Community members
and 1,458 service
providers**

have increased technical capacity due to the LetGirlsLearn initiative.



12,916

**Community
members**

applied new technologies and/or practices as a result of the LetGirlsLearn initiative.



9,383

**Community members
(48% were girls)**

were directly involved in the design and implementation of the project, including those who attended trainings or workshops.

Success Stories

The Library Project

In Laura Harris' remote community, the secondary school had a modest library built by the community. The library was used but the quality of the book content was not girl-friendly with most stories ending in marriage or reinforced notions of the inferiority of women. The lack of empowering content bothered the female teachers, the librarian and the school director. Additionally, the existing sports field is used predominantly by male students and female students didn't feel comfortable using it during class breaks or teacher absences. Rather, they returned home and didn't return for the remainder of classes missing out on valuable educational opportunities.

In response, the school director, the librarian and the Volunteer wrote a grant to the Let Girls Learn program to request funds to improve the quality of the existing library. They chose to stack the shelves with books and resources



that provide inspiring and thought provoking content and offer alternative narratives for youth, especially females. In addition to buying books, the community provided training to the students on how to use the library, training to the teachers on how the library can support their teaching and training to the librarian on how to manage and catalog the books.

The library improved attendance for female students who now retreat to it in between classes, rather than leaving campus. The teachers noticed an improvement in the quality of conversation taking place amongst the students. They began copying down quotes from philosophy books and posing rhetorical questions to each other. The students inquired about books about successful women and teachers began using the library to prepare their lessons.





Melany Danielson offers health care education to local families.

Peace Corps Partnership Program

The Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) connects interested groups or individuals and allows them to donate directly to projects addressing pressing needs in developing communities where Peace Corps Volunteers serve. Peace Corps Volunteers and their Cambodian counterparts design projects together and seek funding through PCPP. Projects implemented in 2016 assisted in a number of areas including education, health, career development, and youth development.

In 2016, PCPP provided approximately \$9,795 in funding for 7 projects.



1,048

community members

were directly involved in the design and implementation of the project, including those who attended trainings or workshops.



6,018

community members

received an indirect benefit from the projects.



1,830

community members and 361 service providers

have increased technical capacity due to the PCPP projects.



2,191

people

applied new technologies and/or practices as a result of the PCPP projects.

Success Stories

Health Fair

In the rural farming community of Krova in Kampong Thom district, many of the residents are uneducated and lack basic knowledge about health and sanitation practices such as hand washing, the importance of covering food, and washing produce. It is common for people to believe that diarrhea is caused by either the weather or “bad air”. Those who do know about these basic health practices often still do not use them consistently in their day to day life.

Seeing room for improvement, health center staff and village health volunteers (VHVs) approached Peace Corps Volunteer Jessica Bedard with the idea of hosting a health fair. Health practitioners in Krova are not able to educate patients as they would like at the health center about how their lifestyle habits are affecting their overall wellbeing. Often the health center is too busy to focus on these topics or the patients just want to receive medication and leave.

Jessica applied for an \$885 USAID grant and leveraged it with over \$500 worth of community contributions to host a one-day health fair at a local school. This fair focused on correcting health myths and explaining how WASH practices affect our health. By explaining the science behind the fecal oral cycle, individuals gained the understanding they needed to prompt behavior change.

The health center staff and VHVs ran and managed the fair. Nearly 300 families attended the fair—exceeding the organizers expectations by 75 families—and were trained in child health and nutrition through US government-supported health area programs. The 15 volunteers of the Krova health community who helped run the event received training for each of the sessions that were held during the fair. For all of the volunteers, at least some, if not all, of this was new information for them. All of the volunteers work in the health field in some way either as community health educators (VHVs), midwives, nurses, or doctors. By not only learning this new information, but by practicing disseminating it in a structured way, these individuals are better equipped to educate the community further on these health issues.

One of the most significant beneficiaries of the project was PCV Jessica’s counterpart, a village health volunteer. Her enthusiasm in managing the fair was, in the eyes of Jessica, the pinnacle to its success. As this was her first time running a meeting, let alone an entire project, she was able to learn a lot from the process. From managing volunteers and communications to curriculum planning and crisis management, she truly benefited from this experience from all angles. She will be able to take these skills into her career and be a more effective change agent because of it.



Women attend health fair for basic check up.

Success Stories

I am American...

I live in Kampong Chhnang province in a sparsely populated district isolated from the rest of the province because of the Tonle Sap River. The only exposure to American culture is the American media and the occasional wandering tourists. When anyone sees me, they immediately ask about my nationality. I tell them I am an American, but they don't believe me. They can't conceive that an American can have different color skin and hair from what is portrayed in the media.

I explain my identity and how vast and diverse America is, but it is hard to judge whether they really understand or just nod to be nice. I speak a lot to my host family about my identity and background and how almost everyone has a story of how their ancestors made it to America. Now my host mom valiantly

insists that I am an American to her coworkers who kept questioning whether I am really American. Watching her defend me really warmed my heart and showed me how much she really understood and loved me.



Tai Le with his host family

Another indicator of the impact my conversations have had on my community was when another Peace Corps volunteer visited my site. I was nervous about it because this volunteer has a more stereotypical American appearance than I do. I was worried that the community would compare me with the volunteer and say that he looks more American than I do. One of the math teachers did make the comparison and said that the volunteer looks more European than I do. I was extremely happy because this showed me that he did understand our conversations. I told him that his comparison was exactly right and that the volunteer looks more European than I do because the volunteer's ancestry is from Europe while mine is from Asia, but we are both American.

– Tai Le

The story of my student Leia



Doug Neese and his student Leia

My student Leia was very shy when I arrived a year ago. My counterpart and I would often ask her questions and she would look to her friends for help. My counterpart said she was always like this though she had very good English and he had encouraged her in the past.

Slowly over the course of the year, I became more comfortable within the classroom and so did my students. Little by little, I had more students answering the question I posed. Leia became more relaxed as well, but was still avoiding answering a question when called upon.

When we began planning CAMP STAR in my province of Prey Veng I thought long and hard about which students would gain the most and who would share it with their classmates.

My co-teacher and I agreed that Leia was ideal. We set off to camp and all were very excited. Leia quickly integrated with the students of the five other high schools and stood out as one of the most vocal students during the camp.

I feared when we returned to school that Leia would again lack confidence. I was caught by surprise when on the first Monday back at school she approached me and asked if she and her friends could lead 9th grade presentations on what they learned. We held planning meetings and Leia gladly took the role of lead presenter. For the next two weeks, Leia and two other students presented the camp information to the other 9th graders. After the camp, Leia was no longer the quiet shy girl who avoided my look in class. She gained the confidence to know that she could speak in front of others and has become one of the best students I have in Cambodia.

– Doug Neese



Students receive hand washing instructions.

Small Project Assistance

The Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program is a collaboration between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Peace Corps. The goals in Cambodia are to support local community development projects in sectors ranging from health to agriculture and basic education.

Peace Corps Cambodia Volunteers, in cooperation with their Cambodian counterparts, assist communities to achieve development goals related to Capacity Building and Sustainability. Projects include topics in areas such as: health, life skills, education, art, and leadership.

In 2016, SPA provided approximately \$70,000 in funding for 37 projects.



18,368

community members

were directly involved in the design and implementation of projects, including those who attended trainings or workshops.



23,272

community members

received an indirect benefit from the projects.



18,368

community members and 703 service providers

increased technical capacity due to SPA grants.



4,764

community members

applied new technologies and/or practices as a result of SPA grants.

Success Stories

Celebrate Learning: A Community Capacity Building Project



In a rural community in Kampong Thom, only 35% of children enrolled in the primary school make it to middle school and even fewer of them graduate from the twelfth grade. This low level of education attainment increases the human trafficking vulnerability of youth. With the support of a USAID Trafficking in Person's grant, Valerie Rojas and her counterparts in the community launched a project to mitigate the risks of human trafficking and minimize dropout rates.

It is common in this community for daughters to stay home to help with housework and care for younger children, while sons are sent to work in the fields or in the city to earn money. Even families whom are invested in their children's education are often unable to provide a reliable means of transport to go to school.

Through the project, the community mobilized to create education advocates amongst the parents and teachers. At the middle school, workshops were held with teachers to empower them to be agents of change. Then over 200 parents of primary school students attended interactive sessions led by the middle-school staff on the importance of education and its benefits, safe migration practices and personal success stories on how education impacted their lives.

The school leaders also identified sixth graders from four primary schools who showed great promise, due to their work ethic and academic potential, but whom were struggling to attend school because of the distance and inability to afford transport. The project provided 22 bikes to the schools to lend to the selected students.

It is estimated that nearly 1,000 vulnerable individuals benefited from the project.



Homestay Experience

From a Host Family: How Peace Corps helps my community

We feel very honored to host volunteers. They come to Cambodia to help, so we want to support them. They become members of our family. We know they get homesick, so we make them feel like they have a home and family here in Cambodia.

The volunteers we have hosted work and study so hard. They read all the time, even at the meal table. They are precise about their work and are always on time. We want our children to copy their habits. They are smart people because they read a lot.

We have learned so much from the volunteers, such as their views on religion. And in turn, we teach them about Khmer culture and religion.

The community has benefited greatly from the volunteers. The children in the community are learning English and the school has sufficient toilets because of the volunteers and their Cambodian counterparts' community development work.

– Mr. Khong Than and Ms. Chea Vanna, host family



“Relationship is especially important...”



Out of all the experiences that I knew was waiting for me in Peace Corps, the aspect that I was most worried about was living with a host family. Now that I have been in Cambodia for more than a year, I don't know what I would do without them. From my first day on site, my host parents have done their best to ensure that I am happy and taken care of.

The relationship between me and my host mother is especially important. She has been absolutely integral to my success as a volunteer in the community and I don't know what I would do without her. She is more than

willing to go out of her way in advising me on people in the community that I should and shouldn't work with, making sure I know what the Khmer prices are so I don't get overcharged, calling tuk tuks, or even brewing me a cup of coffee every morning. We understand each other in a way that I did not anticipate. Sometimes we even have conversations where I will speak in English and she will speak in Khmer, and we will understand each other perfectly. She is definitely the best friend on site that I could ask for but, didn't expect.

– Bryan Armstrong

Homestay Experience

My host mom said “She is my child”

Peace Corps has been an incredible life changing journey. Volunteers each have different aspects that help make this journey sweeter. For me, it's my host family. I have felt nothing but love and support from them. They have been my biggest supporters here. I feel extremely lucky to have been placed with them. They go above and beyond the call to take care of me and to make sure I am safe. They make sure I have what I need to fit in as one of their “Khmer children”; from helping me choose the perfect purse for the first day of school to buying me the perfect dress to wear to weddings. I know that they will always love me as “their” child. I know this, because my host mom introduces me to everyone as “her child”. And when they give her a strange look, she says more forcefully “she’s my child”.



My host mom seems to understand me better than anyone. We have a special bond. She “gets” me much like my real mother in America would. She helps me with projects and nurses me back to health when I am sick. My host family has been an immense factor in helping me integrate in to the community. They have taken me to celebrations, ceremonies at the pagoda and introduced me to village chiefs so my projects would be supported by the community. I owe so much of the success of my service to them. The day I leave my Cambodian family will be one of the hardest days of my life.

– Christy Eubank

“I feel very safe here...”

When I first heard that Peace Corps Cambodia requires volunteers to live with a host family for their service, I admit that I was a little nervous. I wondered if there would be little children or babies crying, if anyone would speak English, if I would like the food, and if they would like me. Now, more than a year into my service, I can confidently answer, yes (but you will love it), no, yes, and of course!

Many things I never expected to happen, happen every day. This is something that I and many other volunteers agree is one of the best parts of service, you really never know what to expect. Luckily for me and those many other volunteers, we have supportive host families to help explain and guide us in our communities. When I first arrived at site, my host family took me around to all the houses/shops in our immediate area and introduced me and the Peace Corps mission. Basically, they made my job so much easier, and thanks to them, and the people in my community, I feel very safe here.

My host sisters (all three of them) are also a major part of my service. They are my teachers, students, guides, occasional nemeses, and best friends. The moments that I will miss the most are those when we play together, solve Khmer math problems, watch TV shows, and those moments when we just watch the sun go down, eat sour mango, and hang out. It's difficult to pinpoint a single, life changing memory of my service that doesn't include my host sisters or host parents.

– Ava D'Sa





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