

## Rotarians visit to Cambodia 11-14 November 2022

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NGO's visited:

- Cambodia Family Support (CFS), Battambang & Pailin Provinces
- Children's Improvement Organization (CIO), Siem Reap
- Kampong Tralach Green School (KTGS), Kampong Chhnang Province

Our main mission was to visit **Cambodia Family Support**. We flew from Perth via Singapore, arriving Siem Reap mid-morning Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November. We were met by Dr Samnang (CFS Director) with a van and driver.

Before we left Siem Reap we stopped very briefly to visit Children's Improvement Organization. The directors, Sitha Toeung and Sreymom, are a dedicated couple who have been caring for and educating disadvantaged children since 2009. <http://www.childrensimprovement.org/about.html>



Family style meals at CIO



Children play in the CIO compound

### Cambodia Family Support

Enroute to Palin we stopped in Kamrieng District (Battambang Province) to visit several CFS projects that were close to the main road. By late afternoon we entered Pailin Province and made the city. Pailin Province is the smallest province in Cambodia and was the last refuge of the Khmer Rouge as they progressively withdrew to the north. Both Kamrieng District and Pailin Province border Thailand which is a strong pull-factor for the rural poor seeking employment there. This often leads to exploitation, trafficking, and sexual abuse.

During the following two days in Pailin we visited many villages and small communities where CFS has had a significant impact. On the third day we travelled to Rattanak Mondul District in Battambang Province. Again, with Dr Samnang and the CFS field officer responsible for that area, we were able to see more of the same and the profound impact CFS has on lives of the rural poor.

- Income generation initiatives
  - Animal husbandry (cows, pigs, goats, chickens, ducks, fish and frogs; tailored to conditions - water is often a scarce resource in this region; Small roadside shops (motorcycle and bicycle repairs, food/basic household items, barber shop, dressmaking); Vegetable gardens



Cows – animal bank is very popular



Pigs – this family has access to plenty of water, required for raising pigs



Frog farm – a relatively new initiative



Goats – need lots of space



Chickens (+ one small dog)



Fish pond



Ducks sell in the market for US\$5



Market garden



Road-side food shop sells fresh produce and packaged foods/drink



This young man supports his family with income from motorcycle repair shop. The family live behind the small shop.



Vin and Helen in front of a chicken coop



Anita with CFS field staff at SHG meeting

- Housing



Basic house for a family who previously had totally inadequate shelter. Latrine and rainwater jar also provided.



These 2 young women live in a small one-room structure (kept very clean and tidy). They rely on the kindness of neighbors for subsistence. Dr Samnang discusses ways CFS can help them.

- Water and Sanitation - includes construction of simple pit latrines (in accordance with Cambodian authority specifications). Water conservation and communal water supply are vital in areas where water is difficult to access, eg. creating ponds; drilling village bores with a fitted hand pump; 1800 litre concrete rainwater collection jars -- of which thousands have been provided by CFS over the past 14 years; filters for potable water.



Communal water supply – bore and pump



Rainwater collection jar



Another village bore and pump – had to drill down 70 meters to hit water



Vin and Dr Samnang get some pump action going

- Self Help Groups (SHG) are formed in each village headed by a committed village leader. The role of the SHG is to encourage community members to work together, address problems within the community. CFS field staff and Dr Samnang provide initial guidance. This focus often identifies particularly marginalised families that can receive targeted assistance from CFS.



We visited a SHG meeting. The village chief is also the SHG leader and is very active in supporting all his community members.

- Education  
CFS recognizes that today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. CFS is active in local government schools – installing toilets and hand washing, teaching youth (and teachers) basic concepts which are not part of the official curriculum. We visited a couple government schools and the two most recent CFS Community Education Centers, both in Pailin. The newest center is in the

yet-to-be established CFS village. The land for this project was donated by a local. The school already operates, children come from the surrounding area to attend. Next steps are to create good water sources and erect housing.



CFS Community Education Center in Pailin-(one of two in Pailin).  
The young teacher is highly committed and delightfully enthusiastic.



Inside the education center. For these young students sitting on the floor is a preference.



CFS builds hand washing and toilet facilities at government schools that have none.



School assembly time – CFS staff participate to teach students about health & hygiene, personal safety, food security, etc.

- Pailin Family Center  
This facility in Pailin city continues to provide short-term accommodation and care for (mostly) women and children in crisis including victims of trafficking.

On the final day we travelled by van to Phnom Penh, 365 kms taking 9 hours under at times ‘testing’ conditions. A new 4-lane, dual carriageway between Phnom Penh and Battambang is nearly completed. Meanwhile, and disconcertingly, vehicles travel in both directions on both sides of the highway. Fortunately, we were not driving!

We stopped outside Phnom Penh to visit Kampong Tralach Green School, another small local NGO. We met the director Vicheany Yiv and her husband Bunthea, both teachers. The school provides free education open to all students. <https://www.facebook.com/KTGS2016>



Children arriving for afternoon classes



Anita, Vin, Helen and Vicheany (KTGS head)

### CFS Funding

As earlier reported, a US-based private foundation that funded CFS for the past 5 years had to withdraw funding. This reversal was in no way a result of dissatisfaction with CFS. It is an issue with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service regulations (IRS). For the time being continuation of funding from this private foundation is not possible.

Because this foundation was our major donor, this has left CFS with insufficient funds to continue activities in 2023 at the same scale as previously.

We are working on ways to replace this lost funding. While in Phnom Penh Vincent and Helen met with the Chief of Mission of a UN agency with a mandate that fits with CFS. Interest was expressed and the possibility of future funding from that source discussed. Further discussion of this possibility is planned. Of course, at this stage nothing is confirmed.