



ROTARY WHEELS FOR LEARNING 2019 POST TRIP REPORT

This report covers the Rotary Wheels for Learning Team 2019 accomplishments in Cambodia, and outlines the goals for the Rotary Wheels for Learning Team 2020.



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Rotary Wheels for Learning Aim

The Rotary Wheels for Learning (RWFL) Project is an international humanitarian project, conducted in Cambodia, and led by the Rotary Club of Gravenhurst. In its eighth year, the project's aim is twofold; first, we build, repair and distribute bicycles to impoverished rural children so they may have the opportunity to attend school. Secondly, we identify and fund critical Education and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) projects at rural schools so the children can remain healthy and stay in school.

Why Cambodia

Cambodia experienced significant turmoil in its recent history, and only since early 2000 has the country been at peace. During the Khmer Rouge years (1975-1979), life in 'Democratic Kampuchea' was strict and brutal. The party's aim was to establish a classless communist state based on a rural agrarian economy and a complete rejection of the free market and capitalism. To accomplish this, they abolished money, free markets, schooling, private property, foreign clothing styles, religious practices, and traditional Khmer culture. Public schools, pagodas, mosques, churches, universities, shops and government buildings were shut or turned into prisons, stables, re-education camps and granaries. There was no public or private transportation, no private property, and no non-revolutionary entertainment. While figures on the number of people who died during the Khmer Rouge's rule are disputed, most estimates say between 1.4 million and 2.2 million people starved to death, died of disease, or were murdered out of a population of just 8 million.

One of the significant long term impacts of this genocide is a general lack of support in the rural areas of Cambodia. Where they exist, hospitals, clinics and schools are often located great distances from the villages making it very difficult for villagers to access them. Children that can attend school are often prevented from doing so as the distances to the school are significant. Rural children often have important chores they need to accomplish at home, such as gathering fire wood, going to the local well or pond for the family's water, or working in the rice fields – all taking precedence over a formal education.

RWFL Team 2019 Bicycle Distribution

From 25 January – 17 February 2019, 22 Rotarians and Friends participated in the RWFL Project. This year's team was made up of Rotarians representing seven clubs within District 7010 including Gravenhurst, Bracebridge, Minden, Barrie Kempenfelt, Collingwood-South Georgian Bay, and North Bay-Nipissing. We travelled to six different provinces (Takeo, Svay Rieng, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Speu, and Kep) and covered more than 1200 km which equates to 24 hours of riding the bus. Seven of the 8 distribution sites received 112 bicycles, while the 8th received 116 for a total of 900 bicycles.



(The red stars indicate our distribution hubs - where we have a hotel, and the green stars are the actual distribution locations)

The bicycles are purchased in Phnom Penh for \$37.00 US, and then transported to the actual distribution site via a local contractor. As the bicycles are gently used, we have a team of “bicycle mechanics” who conduct the repairs and verify the serviceability of the bicycle. Spare parts are purchased in Phnom Penh prior to the first distribution so that we are equipped to make all necessary repairs - typically 1 in 2 bicycles require some type of repair (tire change, tube repair, brake cable replacement, chain adjustment). Our goal is always 100 % serviceability for each bicycle so that every child receives a bicycle that is as close to new as possible.



(Team members repairing a rear tire)



(The arrival of the bicycles)



(Purchasing spare parts)

After the bicycles are assembled and ready for distribution, we conduct a formal ceremony which local government officials and district school board members attend. At this point, we give a dental hygiene demonstration for the children and then provide each child with a new toothbrush and toothpaste. Once the formalities have been completed, we distribute the bicycles to the children, who for the most part have waited patiently for many hours in the hot sun.



(Kim Marinigh and Linda Tilley demonstrating the proper method of brushing their teeth)



(Waiting patiently for the bicycles.....)



(Our guard dogs protecting the bicycles)



(One of 900 happy children)



(Pat Bruder Adjusting handlebars)



(Mike Marinigh installing pedals)



(Katie Cole repairing a tire)

RWFL 2019 Projects

Following our successful trial project in 2018, we set a lofty goal of completing 8 projects for 2019. The projects included 3 wells, 2 wash areas, 2 playground renovations, a latrine renovation, provision of a ton of rice to the Peoples Improvement Organization, and the distribution of 32 water filter systems to 6 schools and two villages. The table below outlines the project and associated sponsors.

Projects	Location	Sponsor
Water filters	Kampong Trach Village, Kampot	Bracebridge Rotary
Water Filters	Khos Chhvang Village, Kampot	
Water Filters	2 x ea school (6 schools)	
1 Ton of rice	Peoples Improvement Organization	Darren Wiggins / Mr Goodwin
Washing Station	Siem Reap	Lindsay Rotary
Well	Rural School Village Program	Shirley Hoskins
Renovate One Toilet Block (3 rooms)	Prey Veng Primary School, Kampong Speu	Minden, Collingwood-South Georgian Bay, Barrie, North Bay-Nipissing, and Niagara Falls Rotary
Build new washing place		
Drill and cap well		
Generator and water pump		
Water storage tank		
Renovate playground		
Sanitation and hygienic materials		
Playground	Tham Kimsorn Primary School, Kampong Speu	Rob Foster / MaryAnne Marshall / Mike Cole
Well	Taprom School, Kampot	Kim and Pat Bruder
Wash area	Donbun Primary School, Kampong Trach	District Grant / Gravenhurst and Kirkland Lake Rotary

Water Filters

Approximately 80 percent of all Cambodians living in rural areas have limited access to safe drinking water. This holds true in all of the schools we interact with - although they may have a well, the water still needs to be filtered or treated to be made safe to drink. To begin to address this issue, we distributed two water filter systems to each of the schools we visited, and provided water filters to 15 families in two separate villages located in Kampot Province. In each of these villages, they were using ponds, which animals had access to as their drinking water. In future years, we will continue to provide the water filters to all schools we interact with.



(Ten happy families receiving new water filters)



(Sokhal Seng demonstrating how to use the filters)



(Steve Meadley presenting water filters in Kampot Province)

Rice Distribution, Phnom Penh

The People Improvement Organization (PIO) is a local NGO operating in Phnom Penh Cambodia founded by Phymean Noun in 2002. Children attending PIO are from families living in extreme poverty. PIO students receive school uniforms, school supplies, a daily meal, clean water and access to health care. In 2018, when we were giving out bicycles to the children, we were asked if we could support PIO through the provision of rice. Rice is given to the parents of the children, in exchange for an agreement to let the children come to school, instead of making them work to help make money for their family. In 2019 we came back to the school and were able to donate 1 ton of quality rice to PIO.



(RWFL Team 2019 members and PIO students with some of the rice)

Washing Station – Siem Reap Province

Vihea Chen Primary School is located in the poor district of Siem Reap, and has been lacking a wash station for more than a decade. Children did not have a means of washing their hands prior to eating, or after using the washroom causing many of them to get sick and miss schools days.



Well – Rural School Village Program

The Rural School Village Program (RSVP) is a sub-component of Cambodian Self-Help Demining (CSHD). The organization was started in the 1990s by Aki Ra while he was demining in rural villages. These villages had no access to education so the village chief approached Aki Ra and asked him to build them a school. As a result, in 2011 the “Rural School Village Program” was established. Since that time 21 schools have been built in the remotest parts of NW Cambodia. This past year, we funded the construction of a well at Bour Run village, Odder Meanchey Province. The well is positioned at the school but used by the entire village as it’s the first well ever built in the village.



(Local school children posing with the new well)

Signature Project – Prey Veng Primary School, Kampong Speu Province

This year’s signature project took place in Kampong Speu Province at the Prey Veng Primary School. The infrastructure was in such a poor state or non-existent, many children stopped coming to school as they were continuously getting sick. Sponsored by several Rotary Clubs, we were able to drill a well, purchase a pump and generator, build a wash area, renovate the latrines, provide a year’s supply of

soap, and renovate the playground. These improvements have already bore fruit as attendance is way up and sickness has dropped.



(New wash area, storage tank and latrine)



(Wash area includes sinks and taps for buckets)



(The well and pump assembly)



(Children enjoying the renovated playground)



(Team members from the sponsored Rotary Clubs)

Playground – Tham Kinsorn Primary School, Kampong Speu Province

While playgrounds are not directly associated with Education, in Cambodia they actually increase attendance as they draw the younger children to school. They serve as a means of fun and friendship, which actually makes the children want to go to school and learn, as they get to make friends and play.



(The renovated playground includes slides, merry-go-rounds, and swing sets)

Well – TaProm School, Kampot Province

This school was built in 2018 by Banyan Tree (an NGO based out of Australia) and includes a main classroom, library and wash area. Prior to sponsoring the well, the students carried water from the local stream to the latrine cistern and wash area using buckets. The well includes an electric pump that now fills both the latrines and wash area.



(The original wash area)



(Pat and Kim Bruder, proud sponsors)

Wash Area – Donbun Primary School

This school is located on salt flats and as a result, cannot drill a well as the water would be contaminated by sea water. Therefore, the wash area draws water from a reservoir located 200 meters away using an electric pump to move it into the wash area storage tanks and latrine cistern.



(Mike Cole and Mike Marinigh beside the new wash area) (A team member and local children use the wash area)

Goals for 2020

The RWFL Team 2020 will be heading back to Cambodia in January 2020 to distribute 816 bicycles in six of our target areas (table 1). In addition to the bicycles, we will be funding and project managing 9 projects that will begin construction as early as August 2019 (table 2).

Table 1 – Bicycle requirements 2020

Distribution	# Bicycles	Location	Province
1	102	Free the Bears	Takeo
2	102	Svay Rieng	Svay Rieng
3	102	Rotary Club Siem Reap	Siem Reap
4	102	Siem Reap (RSVP)	Siem Reap
5	102	Battambang	Battambang
6	102	Kampong Speu	Kampong Speu
7	102	Banyan Tree	Takeo / Kampot
8	102	Kampot/Kep	Kampot/Kep
All distributions (102 bicycles)			816 bicycles
Cost in Canadian Dollars for 816 bicycles			\$48,400.00

Table 2 – Projects 2020

Projects	Location	Project Cost Canadian \$	Sponsored
2 tons of rice for PIO	People Improvement Org, Phnom Penh	\$1,800.00	No
Wash Area (Rotary School)	Svay Rieng	\$2,200.00	No
Well (Sophanit Prin) TBC	Siem Reap	\$2,400.00	No
Water Filter Sytem, Siem Reap (CSHD)	Siem Reap	\$1,600.00	No
2 Room School House (CSHD)	Siem Reap	\$16,000.00	Rotary Club of Gravenhurst
Well	Battambang	\$2,200.00	No
Renovate 7 toilets and install wash area	Kampong Speu (Multiple Projects at one school)	\$3,600.00	No
Water pump, water tank, pipes, electrical		\$4,800.00	No
Drill 50 m well		\$1,600.00	No
Soap for 1 year for 6 schools		\$500.00	No
Latrine and wash Area (Banyan Tree)	Phnom Sampov, Battambang	\$3,000.00	No
Water Filter program for schools	2 filters per school	\$1,400.00	No
		\$41,100.00	

Notes: 1. All costs in Canadian dollars at 1.3337 exchange (3 Apr 19)

2. The above table is an estimate as of 3 April 2019 and may change once detailed planning and budgeting have been completed – expected sometime in June/July timeframe.

Financial Support Needs

We are actively seeking financial support for the both the bicycles (\$50.00 Canadian per bicycle) and the 9 projects in Table 2 above. If you or your Rotary Club can support the funding or partial funding of any of these projects, it would be very much appreciated. ***As the projects need to begin no later than September for a completion date of January 2020, we ask that your donations be received at the Rotary Club of Gravenhurst by end August.***

One hundred percent of your donation goes towards the projects – our team members and local Cambodia volunteers are not paid. Only the actual workers (local contractors) that are hired to construct the projects and our Project Managers are paid. Individual donations are tax deductible as we are a registered charity with CRA.

RWFL Team 2020

If you would like to become a member of the RWFL Team that deploys to Cambodia in 2020, please contact us at rwflteam2018@gmail.com

Details for RWFL Team 2020

Location: Cambodia, SE Asia

Dates: 25 January – 16 February 2020.

Team Meeting Date: 7 September 2019

Approximate Costs: \$3300.00 Canadian (includes airfare, lodgings, meals, in country transport, spending).

Team size: 18-20 members (Rotarians and Friends).

Requirements: No experience is necessary; we will provide the bicycle training and expertise

For more information: to obtain more detailed information please send an email to rwflteam2018@gmail.com

RSVP: Interested members should send a response as soon as possible as spots are filling quickly.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at rwflteam2018@gmail.com . Alternatively, you can view our past distributions on Facebook, simply type in **Rotary Wheels for Learning (RWFL)** under search and then request to join the group.

Thank you in advance for your interest in this very worthy cause.

Rotary - Making a difference and connecting the world!

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