



PEACE CORPS CAMBODIA



Annual Report 2018

Table of Contents

<i>12 Years of Partnership and Service</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Our Vision and Values.....</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Message from the Peace Corps Team.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Peace Corps Global Overview.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Peace Corps in Cambodia.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Cambodian Government Support.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Our Volunteers Today.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>English Teaching and Teacher Training Program.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Education Accomplishments in 2018.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Education Success Stories.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>What Peace Corps Volunteers are Doing.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Community Health Education.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Health Accomplishments in 2018.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Health Success Stories.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Community-Driven Secondary Projects.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Secondary Project Success Stories.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Homestay Experience.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Counterpart Stories.....</i>	<i>21</i>



12 YEARS of partnership and service

612

Volunteers have served in
19 of Cambodia's 25 cities and provinces since 2007

2018



K12 Swearing-in

25 Education Volunteers swear in on December 28, 2018 and serve in:

- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Thom
- Kratie
- Pursat
- Stung Treng
- Tbong Khmum

2017



K11 Swearing-in

71 Volunteers, 34 in Education and 37 in Health, swear in on September 15, 2017 and serve in:

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

2016



K10 Swearing-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
- Koh Kong
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo
- Tbong Khmum

2015



K9 Swearing-in

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

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

2014



K8 Swearing-in

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

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

2013



K7 Swearing-in

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

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

2012



K6 Swearing-in

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

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

2011



K5 Swearing-in

59 Volunteers, 40 in Education and 19 in Health, swear in on October 3, 2011 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
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo

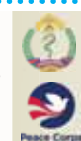
2010



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
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Koh Kong
- Phnom Penh
- Preah Sihanouk
- Pursat
- Siem Reap
- Svay Rieng
- Takeo



MoU with Ministry of Health

Signs MoU with Ministry of Health on May 25, 2010, officially starting our Community Health Education Project.

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

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

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.

2006



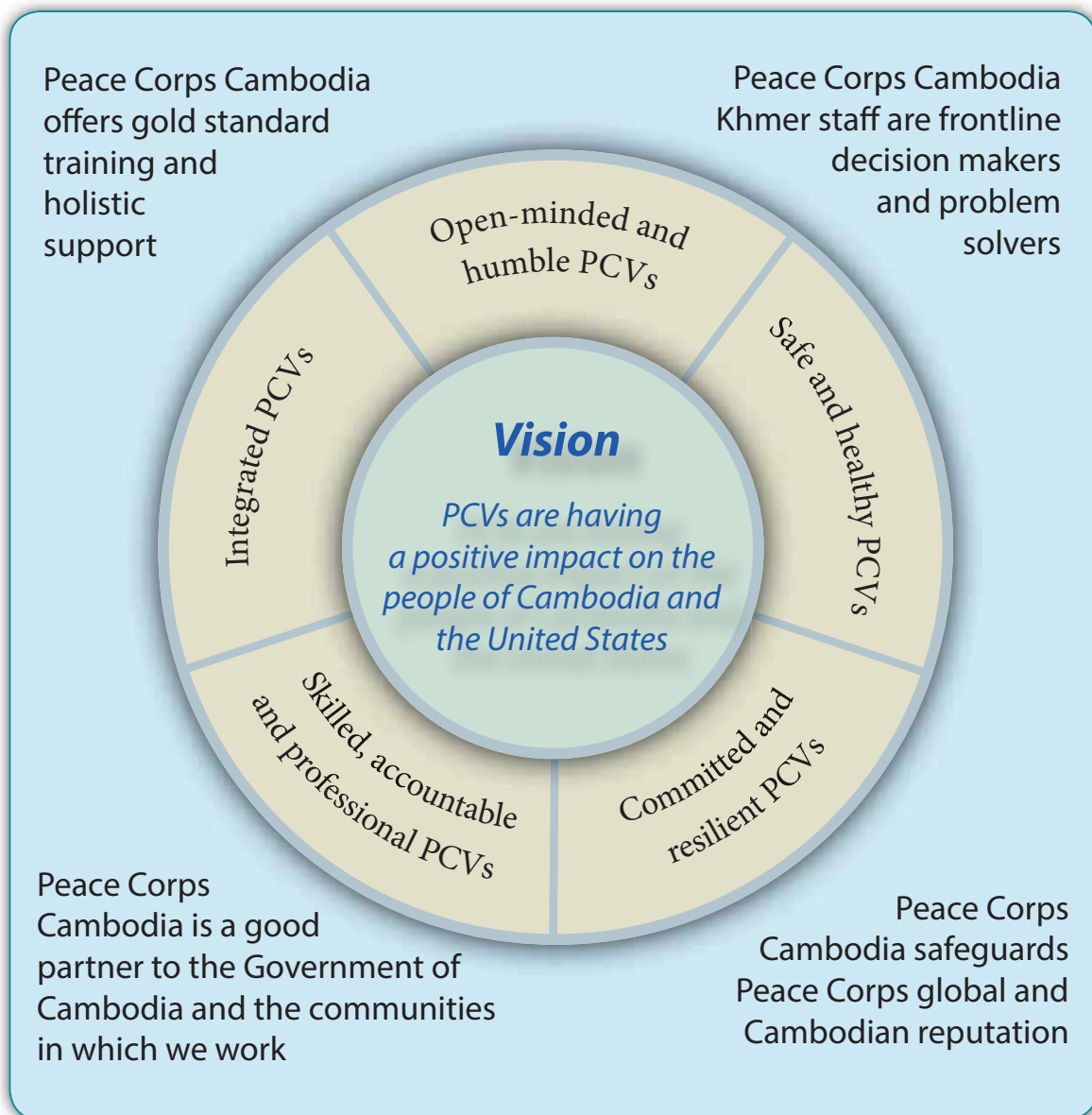
Office Opens

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.



*our **Vision and Values***

Message from the Peace Corps Team



The mission of the Peace Corps is “World Peace and Friendship.” We meet our mission through service. Our Volunteers live and work for 2 years in communities with host families in order to be immersed in and adapt to local culture. This helps them to better be able to contribute to Cambodia’s development and apply their technical skills appropriately in a new environment and culture.

During this last year, our service oriented Volunteers worked in their primary assignments with their teacher and health professional counterparts in order to contribute to the development of English and Health Education in Cambodia. Additionally they have worked with local colleagues and friends on a wide range of community development projects such as the development of a school garden that will help improve the nutrition of children and families, or to establish a library as a resource for a school or community.

Whether working in their primary assignment or with the community on a development project, the goal is local capacity building; by working with the volunteers, community members can learn to identify their own leadership abilities, learn how to access resources, and practice working together toward community development goals that meet the needs and opportunities they have identified. The role of the Volunteer is to participate as a new member of the community and help to facilitate this process.

While working and living in the community, our Volunteers also share the diverse cultures and customs of the United States so that Cambodian people can better learn and know about our country through building relationships. While doing so, our Volunteers are able to share what they have learned about the rich cultures and customs of Cambodia with family and friends in the United States. The friendships built during two years of living and working in a community in Cambodia through mutual sharing can last a lifetime and are the driving force behind our mission to build world peace and friendship.

We continue to be grateful to our host, the Royal Government of Cambodia, who make this possible by inviting the Peace Corps to work in partnership to meet their development priorities at the national, provincial, district, and commune levels. This year marks 12 years working with Cambodian officials, counterparts, professionals in health and education institutions, and building relationships with families, communities and with individuals.

The data and stories shared here represent the spirit of the Peace Corps’ people to people development strategy that can only happen when we learn and grow together. We are proud to share the collaborative achievements of our Volunteers and their Cambodian counterparts in 2018 through this annual report.

Peace Corps Global 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 men and women.
- 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:

More than 230,000

Host countries served to date:

141

PEACE CORPS TODAY

Peace Corps Director

Jody K. Olsen
(RPCV Tunisia, 1966-1968)

Current number of countries served:

64 countries

Current number of Volunteers and trainees:

7,376

Gender:

63% female, 37% male

Marital status:

98% single, 2% married

Minorities:

32% of Volunteers

Average age:

28

Volunteers over 50:

6% of Volunteers



Peace Corps in Cambodia

Individuals who serve as Peace Corps Volunteers are carefully selected through a competitive application process. Peace Corps Volunteers have ranged in ages from 20 to 75, and represent diverse ethnic and minority groups. All current Peace Corps Volunteers in Cambodia 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 receive extensive language, cultural, health, safety, and technical training. Peace Corps provides training opportunities to Volunteers to

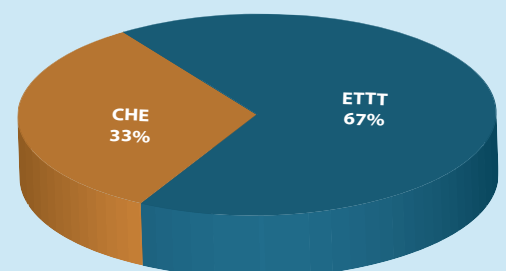
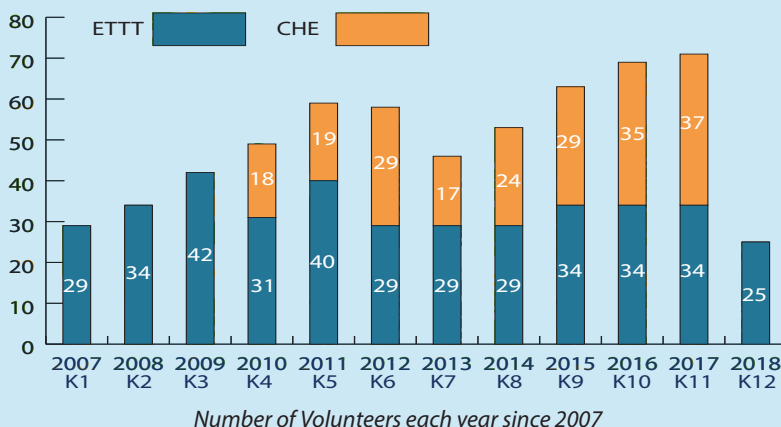
improve their language and technical skills throughout their service. Peace Corps also trains community members, health center staff, and high school teachers on topics such as program management, food security, and working well with Volunteers.

Volunteers live with Cambodian host families for two years 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



Swearing-in ceremony for Peace Corps Volunteers group 12.

Cambodian Government Support

The partnership with the Royal Government of Cambodia is the fabric for much of Peace Corps Cambodia's work. Our partnership began with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport under a 2007 Memorandum of Understanding to send Peace Corps Volunteers to high schools to provide support in English teaching. Our partnership expanded to the Ministry of Health in 2010 with a Memorandum of Understanding to send Peace Corps Volunteers to rural health centers where they provide health education. These partnerships make it possible for the programs to work, reaching over 100,000 Cambodians.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and the Ministry of Health guide Peace Corps Cambodia's strategic direction and geographic reach. Provincial and district level officials in these Ministries assist with identifying Volunteer placement sites. Health center and school directors supervise the Peace Corps Volunteers. In 2018 following the vision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Peace Corps Cambodia has expanded its reach in English Education by starting a pilot program in 15 schools to work with teachers and students in 4th, 5th and 6th grade classes. With the ministry's support and continued guidance we will be able to take this project to scale in 2019.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation provides permission for Peace Corps to work in Cambodia and visas for the Volunteers. The Ministry of Interior at the national, provincial, district, and commune levels assist us in keeping the Volunteers safe and offer emergency support.

Peace Corps Cambodia is grateful for the Royal Government of Cambodia's guidance, collegiality, and encouragement.



Takeo local authority gives a speech during Host Family Appreciation event.



Senior Advisor Parmer Heacox and Takeo local authority attending Host Family Appreciation event.



English Education Volunteers group 11 attending In-service Training.



Community Health Education Volunteers group 11 attending In-service Training.

Our Volunteers Today

2018 Statistics

PCV Numbers	74: Volunteers serve in 13 provinces	between 20 to 29 years old: 90%	Age
Projects	47 : English Teaching and Teacher Training 27 : Community Health Education	between 30 to 39 years old: 6% between 40 to 62 years old: 4%	
Gender	41 : Female 33 : Male	Our current Volunteers come from 27 of the 50 United States.	U.S. States

Pre-service Training

Language hours	:	125 hours
Number of technical hours alongside Cambodian counterpart	:	51 hours
Cross-cultural training	:	32 hours
Practicum hours	:	65 hours
Daily life	:	Living with Cambodian host families



Peace Corps Trainees group 12's first arrival to Cambodia.



English Teaching and Teacher Training

The English Teaching and Teacher Training (ETTT) 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 of Cambodian students, teachers and community members to help them gain access to personal, professional, and academic opportunities.

Volunteers teach at high schools and teacher training centers. Volunteers co-teach with a Cambodian national teacher as requested by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. 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 share innovative 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 the introduction of new technologies.

Since the project opened in 2007, more than 390 English Teaching and Teacher Training Volunteers have served in Cambodia.

Project Goals:

- ▲ Goal 1: Improve Teaching
- ▲ Goal 2: 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.


Education Accomplishments of 2018


Goal 1: Improve Teaching

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


Improve English Teachers' Instructional Practice


 **73%**
of co-teachers increased their use of student-centered teaching techniques.


 **54%**
of co-teachers introduced improved structures or routines to manage classroom interactions more effectively.

 **47%**
of co-teachers increased their use of classroom-based assessments to monitor and inform student progress.


Improve Teachers' English Communication Skills

 **67%**
of co-teachers improved their English teaching methodology.

 **51%**
of co-teachers increased their participation in teacher professional development activities in English.

 **67%**
of co-teachers conducted a higher proportion of their class procedural language in English.

Improve Teacher Trainees' English Teaching Skills

 **48**
teacher trainees increased their use of student-centered teaching techniques.

 **128**
teacher trainees improved their English skills by at least 10% as measured by formal assessments.

 **78**
teacher trainees created, improved, or managed items such as posters, handouts, lesson plans, or other materials that support classroom learning.

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 Leadership Skills

 **1,293**

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

Improve Achievement and Participation in English Class

 **4,225**

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

 **3,025**
students demonstrated increased confidence or motivation in a class, club, or youth camp.

Expand Use of Library and/or ICT Resources

 **4,420**

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.

Education Success Story

School Library

Kate Whitener and Lorn Bunny
Kampong Chhnang Province



Kate and Bunny teaching students how to use library.

“

Education is so important and can change the world and this library will help give our students a better education.

– Bunny

”

North of Phnom Penh, near the Tonle Sap River is Samakki Mean Chey district in Kampong Chhnang Province, where Mittepheap High School serves over 20 rural villages. This year, Mittepheap High school established new library and studying space. Lorn Bunny, one of the high school's English teachers, led this project with Peace Corps Volunteer Kate because she believes in the importance of strong literacy and the need for students to have access to books and resources. Bunny had never worked with a foreigner before and although at first she was a bit timid, she was eager to bring the dream of a functioning library space to Mittepheap High School with Kate.

Prior to this project Mittepheap High School had a space allocated as a library, but it was rarely used and housed a limited number of books and materials. Together Kate and Bunny developed a vision of a library that would engage students in reading and provide a safe space for students to study and expand their knowledge.

After spending many months carefully planning with the School Director, librarian, and various community members the library has now tripled its amount of books in both Khmer and English. There are new and bigger tables and whiteboards for students to learn and read on their own. Leading up to the opening of the library there was a high level of excitement among teachers and students. The library now stays open throughout the school day and is constantly filled with students enjoying and discovering the new books. Additionally, Kate and Bunny now hold their weekly English Club meetings in the new library. The school's central location in the district makes it easily accessible for all students to go in their free time. Since the library's formal opening Kate and Bunny have observed more students reading and an increased number of students have joined their English Club.

The strong relationship between Kate and Bunny enabled the success of this project. From the initial stages of planning through implementation, Kate and Bunny worked together to ensure the goal to improve education at Mittepheap High School was achieved. Bunny believes that her work with Kate was not only a good experience, but that it has given her, "a lot of confidence for her future."



Students are happy for having new library filled with books.

Education Success Story

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Hyemin Nam and Khorn Seanghor
Tbong Khmum Province

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" - A common question to ask students, but a difficult question for students to answer.

The common answer Peace Corps Volunteer Hyemin hears from her students at Dambae High School in Tbong Khmum province is, "teacher". After hearing this response from nearly every student, Hyemin asked her co-teacher, Teacher Seanghor why every student wants to become a teacher. Seanghor simply replied, "That's the only job they know."



Hyemin attending school meeting with students.

The Career Fair took place on August 19, 2018 with 150 students in attendance. There was a total of 10 speakers with careers ranging from Teacher, School Director, Doctor, Banker, government employee for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and Customs Officer. Each alumnae took their time to come to the event and speak about their experience as a student at Dambae High School, their study habits, the process of achieving their careers, and encouraged students to create good reading habits. The alumnae also decided to collect money amongst themselves to buy notebooks and pens for the students that attended the Career Fair.

During each of the presenters' speeches, their passion and excitement to share their experiences with the students was clear. A special moment during the event was when the only female speaker encouraged the female students to continue pursuing their studies no matter what others say. She emphasized that it is possible to continue to study and get a job as females. She explained that she was able to get a job while being married too, so there's no need to choose one or the other.

Hyemin was truly inspired that so many school alumnae attended the event and was especially grateful for Seanghor's excitement and leadership in organizing the Career Fair. While there were definitely stressful moments of miscommunication, Hyemin and Seanghor built a new bridge of knowledge for further positive change in their community and high school through their collaboration and shared commitment to improving the lives of their students.

"I do it with my love. It is my own community and country. I praise you that you love my community and country. I'm happy we can share our knowledge together."

—Seanghor

Hearing this, Hyemin and Seanghor were determined to expand their students' view of their future opportunities. Hyemin remembered the multiple career fairs she attended throughout her years of schooling and how attending those fairs helped her expand her own dreams. Hyemin shared this experience and idea with Seanghor and he was immediately eager to try and create a similar experience for their students. Hyemin suggested inviting individuals from the community with different jobs, and Seanghor took this idea a step further and suggested inviting alumnae from their high school to show their students that they too could become like their seniors. Teacher Seanghor is part of the first generation of graduates at Dambae High School, making him a huge part of the community. Seanghor contacted his friends and fellow alumni to invite them to speak at a Career Fair at Dambae High School.



School meeting with students.

What Peace Corps V

Teaching English, English clubs, girls empowerment, health education,



Volunteers are Doing

, taking vital signs, art clubs, building relationship with communities...





Community Health Education

The Community Health Education project has been cooperating with the Ministry of Health in Cambodia since 2010. The project has worked 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 at health centers selected by the Ministry of Health. They work with health center staff, local village health volunteers, and schools to help people address their health needs. Since the project opened in 2010, more than 208 Community Health Education Volunteers have served in the Community Health Education project.

Project Goals:

- ▲ Maternal and Child Health
- ▲ Healthy Behaviors

Project Activities:

- ▲ Conduct health education sessions at community health centers and through home visits.
- ▲ Promote positive nutrition practices through community and home gardens, and cooking and feeding demonstrations.
- ▲ Promote ante/postnatal checkups, immunizations, and family planning throughout the community.
- ▲ Educate community members on water and sanitation issues such as proper handwashing, hygiene, 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.

Health Accomplishments in 2018

Goal 1: Maternal and Child Health

Community members will improve their knowledge and skills of, and adopt healthy behaviors for, maternal and child health.

Antenatal Care, Checkup and Delivery



4,712

women received health education messages on the importance of antenatal care and postnatal checkup, immunization, family planning, and delivery services.



1,510

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



850

community people were educated on modern contraceptive methods.



1,116

pregnant women received four antenatal visits during their last pregnancy.

Nutrition



10,244

people were trained in child health and nutrition.



6,819

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



3,271

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



73%

of women reached are able to demonstrate how to prepare safe and nutritious weaning foods.



49%

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



3,527

people educated by Volunteers on exclusive breastfeeding.

Water Sanitation Hygiene



60

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



526

community people were trained to purify and properly store drinking water.



7,237

community people are able to identify three or more critical times when they must wash their hands.



241

households trained by Volunteers reported building a hand washing station.

Goal 2: Healthy Behaviors

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

Non-Communicable Disease



10,992

people were educated on non-communicable diseases.



2,524

people were educated on the harmful effects of alcohol and other substances.



7,404

people were educated on healthy diets.



2,550

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



458

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



4,161

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

Reproductive Health



768

people are able to identify at least 2 behaviors to prevent unwanted pregnancy or prevent STIs.



59

people are able to demonstrate the steps to correctly use a condom.

Health Success Story

Healthy Motherhood

*Haley Case and Keav Monorom
Siem Reap Province*



Haley and Monorom doing community outreach.

“Have you learned this before?” Asks Monorom, a midwife at the local health center.

Twenty-one Village Health Volunteers of a rural Siem Reap commune collectively shook their heads as they examined a diagram of sperm fertilizing an egg inside fallopian tubes. This group of peer health leaders was learning basic reproductive biology for the first time. The Village Health Volunteers were being trained to conduct outreach on long-acting reversible contraceptives and the use of a maternal waiting home for pregnant women. During this workshop, midwife Monorom promoted facility-based deliveries and pregnancy care, dispelled myths about birth control implants, and reviewed danger signs during pregnancy. Along with Peace Corps Volunteer Haley, Monorom was leading this project that aims to create a community with safe, planned, and healthy births.

Following initial conversations at the health center led by the chief midwife Saam, Haley and Monorom interviewed ninety-six women across thirteen villages to better understand community priorities in maternal health. Both new mothers and women with many children expressed the need for improved delivery facilities at the local health center and expanded birth spacing access. Not having a comfortable space to rest at the local health center, women often chose to deliver their children in distant provincial specialty hospitals instead of the local health center. Women also expressed difficulty controlling and managing the size of their families. Some women communicated wanting to access longer acting birth spacing because they had no mode of transportation to get to the health center, making shorter acting methods such as pills and injections difficult.

Midwife Monorom believes, “birth spacing and delivery are both part of the same problem.” The health center staff recognized the struggles of local women. They sought to strengthen their comprehensive capacity to provide for the health needs of women through the planning and implementation of a project to establish a maternal waiting house for women; a place to rest prior to delivering their new babies, and include maternal-reproductive health outreach sessions led by trained Village Health Volunteers. Following the training described earlier, Village Health Volunteers immediately felt more equipped to discuss health topics with women in their villages. Thanks to the leadership of midwife Monorom and the dedication of local Village Health Volunteers, Daun Keo Commune is now a healthier place to be a woman and mother.



Haley and Monorom educating community women.

Health Success Story

School Vegetable Garden

Brian Kim and Keo Saren
Prey Veng Province

Situated along the Mekong River in Prey Veng province, Peam Ro Primary School has consistently ranked among the top schools in the entire province. Educating over 530 students from more than 5 surrounding villages, it holds an important role in providing primary education to local young students. The school's current success does not stop School Director Keo Saren from constantly looking for ways to improve his school and the quality of education the students receive.



Brian, Saren, and students working on their garden project.

I believe it is important to improve the quality of our school so that we can make our students' lives and knowledge better than before.

– Keo Saren

Brian and Saren felt confident in implementing this project after they attended a Peace Corps Food Security training together in March 2018, at which both learned techniques such as preparation of organic fertilizers and garden tending. Brian and Saren felt a school garden would be an excellent opportunity for students to take ownership of their own eating practices. Together, the two drafted and submitted a grant through Peace Corps in order to obtain initial funds to support the garden and curriculum implementation.

Peace Corps Volunteer Brian had been working with Saren to learn the Khmer language since he first arrived in Peam Ro. Eventually, their tutoring sessions turned to conversations about what could be done to improve the quality of learning at the primary school. In July 2018, they held meetings with teachers and parents of students at the school in order to identify priority needs of the school and the school community. Through these meetings, a concern was raised about the poor eating habits of the students. Many parents noted that their children preferred eating packaged snacks as opposed to opting for vegetables in order to maintain a healthy and balanced diet.

Subsequent discussions between Saren and Brian led to the idea of implementing a vegetable garden at the school, along with a revamped nutrition curriculum.

I think it is good for our teachers and students to learn about gardening because this is a skill that they can use outside of school.

– Keo Saren



Students working on their garden project.

Community-Driven Secondary Projects

The main focus of the work of Volunteers is to build the capacity of the people with whom they work. While Volunteers concentrate primarily on their assignments in English Teaching and Teacher Training and Community Health Education, they also work with assigned counterparts and other community members to support community-driven secondary projects.

These projects focus on a range of areas including maternal and child health, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, nutrition, youth development and leadership, school resource development or other community needs and opportunities identified with and by the community where Volunteers are placed. Volunteers are trained to use participatory community analysis tools that help community members identify and prioritize their own needs. This understanding of priority needs informs project areas/ideas that could contribute to the development and well-being of the community in general or targeted populations within the community such as children, youth, women, teachers, etc.

Once a project idea is identified and agreed upon, the Volunteer and a community member receive a 3-day training in project design and management. With this learning, they return to the community and together with other community members, they design a project framework and implementation plan that includes: the

project goal, objectives, community asset identification, needed resource identification, roles and responsibilities of participating community members, a budget, and a monitoring and evaluation plan. With this process an idea can turn into a reality and a community can develop together for the good of all.

Some projects can be implemented utilizing existing resources. Others may require community driven fundraising activities to carry the project forward. Other projects may require more economic resources and the Volunteer can support community members in applying for grants from local, national, and international sources. In all cases, the end goal is to meet the needs of the community and at the same time build the capacity of the people involved; empowered and can do this again in the future to develop their own communities and meet their own needs.

During fiscal year 2018, community-driven projects supported by Peace Corps Volunteers helped build the capacity of more than 1,671 Cambodian service providers in the health and education sectors across 16 provinces. These projects reached over 65,076 beneficiaries whose quality of life and improved through their ability to participate in community decision making and community development.



Leah and her washing station.



Students making use of library resources.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Projects

WASH Projects aim to reduce the incidence of waterborne illness in communities, ultimately leading to longer and healthier lives for community members.

- ▲ Community Driven projects supported by Peace Corps Volunteers improve hygiene and sanitation conditions in communities through the construction of facilities and education on topics such as handwashing, water treatment and storage, and the harmful effects of open defecation.
- ▲ Health related infrastructure such as handwashing stations, latrines and water filters may be built at health centers, schools and in households.
- ▲ Reliable water sources can be established through the construction of wells and water towers.

Accomplishments

• Water sources established	: 6	• Handwashing stations built/restored	: 34
• Latrines restored	: 31	• Water filters distributed	: 115
• New latrines built	: 36	• WASH education activities	: 61

Community-Driven Secondary Projects

Gardens and Nutrition Projects

Gardens and nutrition projects aim to improve the nutrient density of meals by educating people to make dietary changes and growing their own fruits and vegetables. Peace Corps Volunteers support the establishment of community gardens at health centers and schools and family gardens to improve dietary intake for children and adults.

- ▲ Gardens created and maintained by students and teachers at schools provide an experiential learning opportunity that complements the content of agriculture classes. Students and teachers take vegetables and fruits home to integrate into their meals.
- ▲ Home gardens that are created through projects increase the dietary diversity of families and are a venue for improving the health of family members, particularly for children under the age of five.
- ▲ Organic farming practices like composting and use of non-toxic organic pesticides can be incorporated into training in garden projects to improve the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables.
- ▲ Cooking demonstrations utilizing increased amounts of healthy garden products help to change eating habits and increase the nutritional value of meals.

Accomplishments • **Community gardens established** : 30

School Resource Development

Resource Development projects focus have focused on improving education through access to learning resources and incorporation of these resources into the classroom.

- ▲ Community driven projects to refurbish and improve resource centers at schools also provide a venue to train teachers and school staff to effectively utilize new resources such as computers, books, projectors, Internet and other learning material.
- ▲ Renovation of classrooms and libraries create environments conducive to learning.

Accomplishments • **Libraries refurbished** : 13
• **Computer labs refurbished** : 1

Student and Youth Life Skills Development

Student and Youth Life Skill Development projects often include confidence building activities, the development of leadership skills, behavior change focused activities related to healthy decision making, gender equality education, future planning, and sports activities among many others things all with the goal of improving the overall life skills of participants.

- ▲ Clubs are established as a safe space for students and youth to learn about topics that are of interest to them. Clubs meet regularly throughout the year and often times conduct and lead their own community based project.
- ▲ Camps often take place over a series of days. Camps can take place in individual communities or involve participants from other areas within a province. Camps are used as a way to supplement club activities or act as the kick-off event for a new club.
- ▲ Peer Education: Leadership clubs will often participate in a training of trainers where they learn topic based knowledge, presentation skills, and how to plan interactive education sessions. Members of peer education groups then go on to educate and lead their peers on topics they feel are important and needed.

Accomplishments • **Clubs established** : 136
• **Camps conducted** : 20
• **Peer education groups established** : 16

Secondary Project Success Story

Women are Gold

Alli Phillips and Saran Um
Kampot Province

“Men are gold, women are white cloth.” This is one of the many Khmer proverbs that infer that men are highly valued and cannot be damaged. While women and their reputations can be easily stained, and once stained, will be impure forever. These words also have the capability to influence a young and impressionable Khmer female in regards to herself-worth and future ambitions. Peace Corps Volunteer Alli Phillips and her local counterparts saw the need to empower female students and to challenge this proverb and cultural norms by creating the Women Are Gold Workshops and Bathroom project.

Alli and her local counterparts created and distributed surveys to female students studying in grade 10 through grade 12 at the community high school. This survey examined and addressed traditional gender norms, importance of education, career aspirations, and ability to properly manage menstruation and proper hygiene at the local high school.

Evaluating the survey responses, Alli and her counterparts were able to observe knowledge gaps and identify common areas of interest. Using the collected information, the Women are Gold workshops were designed and planned. Over the course of five workshops, Alli, her counterparts, and guest speakers held open discussions and lead seminars on leadership skills, career planning, women’s health, goal setting, and importance of positive body image and self-worth. These workshops provided and instilled confidence and

“

The Women Are Gold Workshops were created and designed to be replicable and sustainable.

–Alli Phillips”

leadership skills into young women in the community, and have equipped them with the necessary tools to pursue successful and better trajectories leading into their adult lives.

The survey also revealed that over 70% of the surveyed students felt they did not have access to proper facilities on the school grounds to effectively manage menstruation; this led to stress and distractions throughout the school day. After many discussions and meetings, involving feedback from female students and the school director and staff, the project funded two new female-friendly bathrooms and a changing room that support an enabling environment at the school. These bathrooms provide a safe and hygienic area for over 500 female students.

Alli and her local counterparts are confident that these workshops will continue in the village as a sustainable way to support women’s empowerment in the village and surrounding communities.



Participants attending workshop receive a certificate of attendance.

Secondary Project Success Story

Learning Resource Center

*Nicholas Webert and Phoeurn Tit
Kampong Chhnang*

More than 1,300 secondary schools students and 48 teachers in Kampong Chhnang province now have access to a space to access education resources, use the Internet safely, and collaborate on projects. The idea for this project came from the students and teachers themselves who participated in assessments activities to help Peace Corps Volunteer Nicholas and his counterpart Phoeurn understand the priority needs of their school. Nicholas and Phoeurn engaged the school community in the project from the very start, which led to a high level of community ownership from the school principal, school teachers, and students.

This project established a large open space for the students to use daily by connecting two older classrooms. Five Computers were acquired and 20 computers were repaired and updated. All of these computers now have access to the Internet. Three librarians and two IT teachers have been trained in resource management and on how to teach students to build resumes and surf the Internet safely. All 12th grade students will attend resume building workshops annually and students in all grades levels have completed an Internet surfing safety course.

Through contributions from the community and book purchases, more than 500 new resources are accessible. The Learning Resource Center has created the equal opportunity for all students and teachers to use new technologies and online resources. Additionally, the school principal's commitment to the success of the Learning Resource Center led the school to creating one



Nicholas and Phoeurn buying computer for their computer lab.

hour per week for each class to spend in the resource center.

Phoeurn and Nicholas collaborated on the project design and implementation, co-facilitating training sessions and managing the project timelines and funds on a daily basis. The true success of this project has been the enthusiasm and commitment of the entire school community every step of the way and their commitment to ensuring the sustainability and growth of the learning resource center. Now students in their community have access to a high quality education and greater future opportunities.



Students using library and computer lab.

Homestay Experience

Love is what makes you Family

By: Daniel Ragusano



Daniel with his host family.

I once read a quote that said, "Blood is what makes you related. Love is what makes you Family." With my Peace Corps experience, I was hoping to have a strong bond with my host family. I was nervous about what to expect in the coming months as a Volunteer; a complete stranger in my village and in my household. Though in the beginning there were awkward moments, slight language gaps, and cultural barriers, I have really come to love my host family.

They do everything a normal family would do for one another. They make sure I'm fed and feeling well; they care when I'm coming home or where I'm going; but, most importantly, they provide me with unconditional love every single day. They are always there to make me laugh and feel welcomed.

I was incredibly nervous about the host family situation in Cambodia, because I genuinely didn't know what to expect. However, this experience has far exceeded any of my expectations. I can confidently say that these wonderful humans are going to be my lifelong family members. It has come to the point where I'm already beginning to dread the day I say farewell and head back home, but I know we will remain in contact and I will be back for visits. I will say receiving daily hugs from my two nephews will be a huge part of this life that I'll miss back home.

In addition, I'll miss my host brother making jokes with me and my host mother trying to convince them to go take their nightly showers. I just want to say thank you to my host family for teaching me so much, allowing me to become a part of this family, and for giving me space when needed. My experience would have been very different without them!

I am so grateful for my host family

By: Meghan Register



Meghan with her host family attend local Khmer wedding ceremony.

When I first received my host site packet, I was a little nervous; I had been close with my training host family and was worried that I would not be able to build the same bond with my permanent site family. I was especially nervous because the packet detailed that I would have seven host brothers whereas I grew up in a house full of women. I was not sure how comfortable I would be able to allow myself to be at home, specifically whether I could wear a tank-top and shorts around the house or not. (I do, after following cues from my sister and sisters-in-law.)

Now, I feel right at home with my host family, but the relationship did not happen over-night and it did not build itself. What started as a lot of awkward silences slowly became comfortable conversations – checking in on one another and asking about plans throughout the day – punctuated with natural pauses and just being – comfortably.

In the early months at site I spent a lot of time with my many nieces and nephews and slowly moved up to the grown-ups table, willing to answer any questions they had for me. Aside from myself, my host family members have become my biggest advocates in my host community. They always make sure I know what I need to about community events, holidays, and the "hot gossip". Everyone knows that I am So Korn's daughter and I have been very welcome for it.

A year ago, I could never have imagined how close I would be with my Khmer family. They have seen me sick as a dog, dolled up for weddings, and everywhere in-between. They have been the best part of my service and, as COS grows closer, I cannot begin to imagine how much not seeing them every day is going to impact me – thankfully, my niece has promised to facetime me regularly once I am back in the U.S. The bonds I have made with my family here will be with me for the rest of my life and will, no doubt, continue to influence the way I see the world and people in it.

Counterpart Stories

Dallas and Sorn Theng

By: Dallas Smith

Throughout this Peace Corps journey in Cambodia, I've had the absolute honor of befriending and collaborating with individuals in my community. One Cambodian, in particular, has had a tremendous impact on this experience and the relationship will continue to influence parts of my life for years to come. This incredible human, Sorn Theng, has served many roles in our community even at such a young age; ranging from part-time farmer to a respected member of the monkhood. For me personally, Theng has instructed me in the Khmer language, accompanied me through learning the Buddhist script and my monkhood, served as a wonderful travel companion, and has continuously been my closest friend in our community.



Dallas with his counterpart Theng.

Recently, Theng has pursued a new role in the community through organic farming. Having attended a specialized Peace Corps training on food security in Kampot province, a passion arose in Theng to provide organic produce to promote healthy living in the community. Initially and with Theng's lead, we developed the notion of creating a garden at the local pagoda to enhance the nutritional options for those that inhabit the monastery. With input from the monks and nuns at the pagoda, the idea continued to progress to a functional garden. However, Theng choose to create larger plans with this combination of empowerment, passion, and education. Theng's current project involves using land rich in nutrients at the local high school to construct an additional garden. Carefully selecting the location, the garden will be partnered with the agricultural courses at the high school to ensure the sustainability of the initiative.

In addition to the partnership, Theng has formulated a plan to connect this fresh organic produce grown at the high school with the elderly in local villages who are diagnosed with hypertension. With these chemical free and reduced rate vegetables, the vision is that the morbidity and mortality from hypertension will be reduced through this life style change. Theng has shown the empowerment that can stem from education and collaboration, and he will continue to improve his community's health for years to come.

Patricia and Sister Sotha

By: Patricia Smith

After arriving at site, I remember having a lot of anxiety about being able to make a connection with someone who would potentially be my Counterpart. In the world of Peace Corps, a Counterpart is defined as: "a person in a Volunteer's host community who works alongside the Volunteer." I will never forget my first day at work. I arrived early in the morning, dressed professionally and was ready to learn. I was greeted by a young woman with a big smile. She was and is a midwife who commutes daily to our health center in a rural village that sits at the base of a mountain surrounded by beautiful rice fields. The midwife grabbed my hand and in her best broken English and with all of her heart and confidence, she said to me, "Hello sister". The nickname "Sister" stuck. The staff members who I work with, village neighbors, sellers, and of course my family all refer to me as, "Sister".



Patricia with her counterpart sister Sotha.

I rarely refer to my Counterpart as an actual Counterpart. Her name is Chea Sotha and I call her 'Sister Sotha'. Sotha is in her 20's, lives with her parents in a village that is about 8 miles away from my house. She studies English on the weekends and works very hard. She loves to garden and is very dedicated to her job, culture, traditions and family. Sotha and I have attended several Peace Corps trainings together, we have shared countless meals, we laugh together, and we were once bridesmaids together in a wedding. Sotha has seen me at my worst and has never left my side. She is my mentor, and sociocultural guide. I help her study English. I have joined her family to celebrate Khmer holidays, and she is a family friend of my own Khmer family and is held with a lot of respect from my family.

My relationship with Sotha isn't linear. The best part about Sotha is that she has learned how to work with me. She knows how to challenge me and support me. As a team, we educate pregnant patients together. I help her by using my visual aids that I have created to explain to patients about nutrition, danger signs, and how to manage a healthy pregnancy. Sotha has encouraged me to be more confident with my language and leads by example of how to effectively measure for comprehension from our patients. In the world of Peace Corps and in my world, I would define a Counterpart differently. Yes, A Counterpart is someone who works alongside a Volunteer. My Counterpart is so much more than that definition. She is the first person who I met on my first day at work, and will forever be my sister.



What Cambodia taught
comfort, resiliency, love,
strength, memory, and
family,



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positivity, smile, community,
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