



# ANNUAL REPORT

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# 2024

World Peace and Friendship

## **Peace Corps Cambodia**

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## **December 2024**

Peace Corps is a non-political and non-religious organization of the United States Government that seeks to promote peace and friendship among peoples of different nationalities and cultures. For more than six decades, Peace Corps has provided technical assistance in 141 countries through the implementation of projects in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health and youth in development.

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## Message from the **COUNTRY DIRECTOR**

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

The Volunteers have been working with teachers throughout the country in order to contribute to the development of English 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 school gardens that help improve the nutrition of children and families, or the establishment of a library as a resource for a school and 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, to access resources, and to practice working together toward community development goals that meet the needs and opportunities prioritized by the community. 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 vast array of cultures and customs of the United States so that Cambodian people can better learn and know about the United States by building relationships. Volunteers are able to share what they have learned about the rich cultures and customs of Cambodia with family and friends in the U.S. 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 makes this collaboration possible by inviting the Peace Corps to work in partnership to meet their development priorities at the national, provincial, district, and commune levels. This annual report celebrates 17 years working with Cambodian officials, counterparts, 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 2024 through this annual report.

# 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, primary 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, there are about 751 Volunteers who have served in Cambodia. 538 are English teacher volunteers and 213 are community health education volunteers.

## Project Goal

Cambodian students attain the communication skills in English and life skills necessary to access academic and professional opportunities.

## Project Objectives



### 1. Teachers, Teacher Trainers, and Teacher Trainees

Increase capacity of teachers, teacher trainers and teacher trainees to use general English teaching skills more effectively.

Increase English proficiency of English teachers, teacher trainers and teacher trainees.

Increase capacity of teachers, teacher trainers and teacher trainees to balance female and male participation in the classroom.



### 2. Students

Increase achievement of students in English.

Increase life skills of students.



### 3. Learning Environment

Improve school learning environments through school improvements, increased community engagement, and learning resource development.

# EDUCATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2024



Number of provinces  
**15**



Current Volunteers: **60**



**29 Male**



**31 Female**



**Increase**  
capacity of teachers to use English and general teaching skills



**240**

Number of teachers engaging in co-planning and co-teaching



**Increase**  
achievement of students in English and life skills



**578**

Number of classes in which Volunteers teach students



**Increase** the ability of community members to support students' access to learning by improving the school learning environment



**1,207**

Number of community members involved in school facility improvement projects



**3** Peace Corps  
Volunteer Leaders



**33** High School  
**20** Primary School



**1** Provincial Teacher  
Training Centers

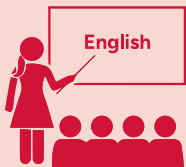


**3** Lower Secondary  
School



**96%**

Percentage of teachers who demonstrate a minimum number of recognized teaching practices in general teaching skills and in English Teaching Skills



**26,781**  
**(Female 14,532)**

Number of students  
taught English in  
a school setting



**737**

Number of students  
attending extracurricular  
English clubs, tutoring  
sessions, and/or camps



**77%**

Percentage of students  
who demonstrate  
achievement in an  
English course



**84%**

Percentage of community members who report Volunteer organized school involvement activities increase their ability to support students' access to learning



**Peace  
Corps**  
CAMBODIA

# EDUCATION SUCCESS STORY

## Playing Games During Breaks at School



### K15 PCV Kyle Fraser-Mines

The kids at my school love when it's time for English class but sometimes I think they are just excited to play games. We end class everyday with a short game to review the vocabulary learned during the lesson that day and the games definitely motivate the students to try harder to learn the new words. Since they know they will need them in the game they

really try to memorize them while I'm teaching. But during class they seem to still not be able to get enough of the games. So many of the students have taken to making me play games with them during their 15-minute breaks throughout the day. The fourth graders really love to play Red Light Green Light but here in Cambodia they call it Cocoma. When I first saw them playing Cocoma I was a bit concerned because they were singing the red light green light song from Squid Games and that was my only reference to that song. I quickly learned that they were not copying Squid Games. Instead that is just how they have played Red Light Green Light here for a long time. So Squid Games is really copying them! The fifth graders love to have me play soccer with them during the breaks. They tell me I am really good at playing soccer but I think it's more that I am taller and older than they are, so I have refined my skills a little bit more. I'm definitely not bad at soccer but they overestimate my abilities. There is one of the boys in my grade 5B class who is actually really good! He dribbles around everyone and makes plays that are so impressive. Even though I get sweaty and tired playing games with the students during breaks it is my favorite part of the day because they get to just be goofy kids and have fun! They aren't stressing at all about doing well in their classes and they get to hang out with their friends!

## World Map Creation Through Creativity and Collaboration



### K15 PCV Talia Desanto

Through the creation of a world map mural in the library, students and teachers have come together to enhance creative capacities and build creativity skills, while learning about the geography of our world. This has fostered new cultural perspectives and has expanded their knowledge in regards to

geography and the world that we all live in. Through the creation of our world map, students were able to learn throughout the entirety of the process. Students identified new countries and were able to see their size comparisons as they drew each country on the wall. It was really impactful seeing the students so interested in the world and being able to have a hands on experience where their contributions reflected an overall big picture. Students asked questions, and showed interest in the project as well as building relationships with their peers and teachers. We collaborated together to create the big picture of our world. We are looking forward to getting the paint to be able to add color into their world of education!

## Creating New Opportunities Through The English Language



### K15 PCV Raynold Chen

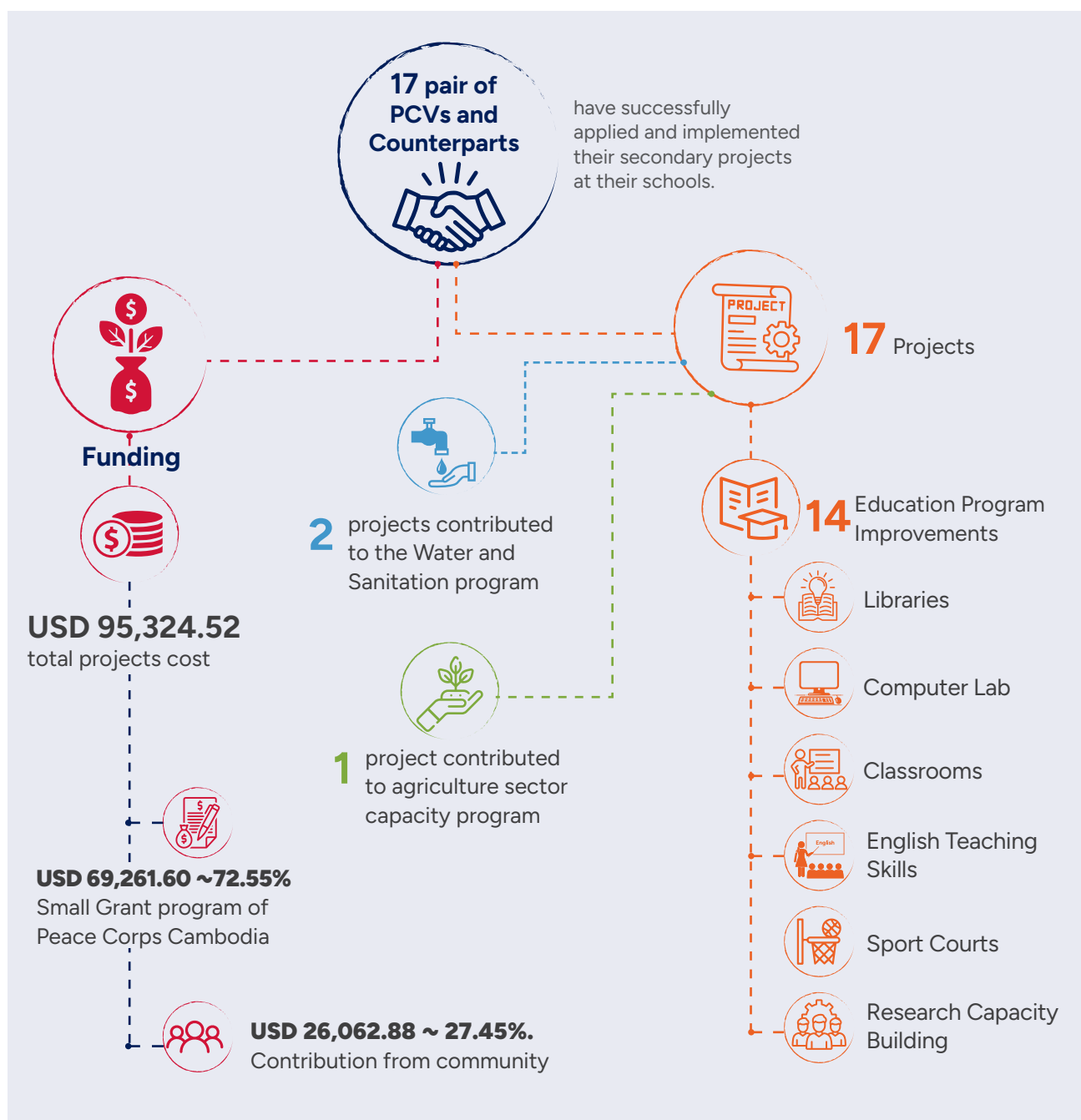
On Monday, July 29th, I hosted my high school's first ever English event in school history. Hun Sen Kampong Chork is the oldest school in the district but has never had any type of English event until this year. One of my counterparts and I chose 4 students from our grade

10 classes to speak in English in front of the whole school. We also chose 4 more students from their classes to be the translator in Khmer during the English event. The 4 English speakers created their own personal speeches by themselves rather than my counterpart and I doing it for them. This makes the speeches even more personal. The speeches were about why you should learn English and about their own personal lives. Over the course of the entire month of July, my counterpart and I met with the students weekly to help them practice reading in front of a giant audience as well as their pronunciations. The event gathered over 40k views in total. The vice governor of my district along with several other notable members from the Ministry of Education came to this event. Other high schools in the area have told my principal how great they thought the event was. They acknowledged our event and told my principal that they plan on doing something similar in the future because of how good the reception was from the community. It was not a competition event. It was about demonstrating a student's potential through the English language. All 4 students spoke in front of the whole school flawlessly.



# SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Peace Corps approach to development is to help people develop the capacity to use their own resources and skills to address their community's needs and empower them through civic engagement to improve their own lives, with participatory, inclusive, and community led. In 2024, Peace Corps Cambodia has organized three trainings on Project Design and Management for 32 Peace Corps Volunteers, 32 Counterparts from schools, and 60 youth volunteers from The Volunteerism for My Community Program. The purpose is to train and build the capacity of all participants on how to identify the community real needs and write the project proposals to address it with participatory and inclusive approaches.



# SMALL GRANTS SUCCESS STORY



## Greenhouse School Garden Produces Organic Vegetables for Healthy Community

A high school in Pursat, Cambodia identified the need for a greenhouse and irrigation system to ensure its gardening program could continue throughout the dry season. Before the project, the school had difficulty gardening during the dry season due to a lack of resources and efficient watering system. Students scooped water from the pond or used a hose to water the plants, resulting in the pond drying out and the students dirtying their school uniforms. Once funded, the school staff and students volunteered their free-time to construct a greenhouse and install a water irrigation system, including a water pump and water container, as well as expanding the pond, which was the primary water source.

Once the greenhouse was established, the school made homemade fertilizer and planted organic crops. With the combination of the greenhouse, fertilizer pit, and expansion of the pond, the school was able to successfully start a sustainable school garden. The result from this grant was not only building a greenhouse but also giving the school tools to sustain this project, including the watering system. The project taught teamwork among the school and community and now encourages students to contribute to their own garden.

## Impact of an Improved Library

One primary school identified the need to revitalize the existing library in order to provide students, teachers, and community members with free access to library and digital resources. Before the grant, many teachers had limited experience with computers. The school director envisioned transforming the school to focus on English and digital literacy, but the absence of computers made this goal unattainable. The grant was used to renovate the library, including the purchase of new bookshelves, desks, books and technology. As well, the grant provided for computer workshops for teachers and students to learn how to use the new technology.

Once established, 50% of the teachers participated in a computer workshop hosted by the Peace Corps Volunteer. This resulted in significant improvement from the teachers: teachers who initially struggled with basic computer functions now operate them with ease, and many learned to type in Khmer using a computer keyboard. Additionally, the library is a popular location for various users: primary school students go to explore new books, secondary and high school students use the space to complete assignments and reading, and community members use the space for meetings and project discussions. As well, the library hosts an English club to further enrich language learning. The initiative of a renovated library not only enhanced the library's utility but also fostered a stronger sense of community and learning.



## Unlocking Digital Literacy

One Primary School in Cambodia identified the need to integrate digital literacy into their curriculum to improve teaching practices, increase student engagement, and improve digital literacy. The school staff, supported by the volunteer, proposed a plan to strengthen capacity by updating technology and enhancing the school's curriculum to incorporate hands-on digital learning. The grant was used to purchase a new Wi-Fi router, projector, smart TV, and computers in order to update the school's digital equipment.

Once established, teachers attended a digital literacy workshop led by a new digital literacy instructor. After the training, the teachers adapted to new teaching methodologies and successfully incorporated digital tools into daily lesson planning. Regular assessments were conducted to monitor progress of both students and teachers. Notably, over 80% of students passed a digital literacy assessment. This project not only bridged the gap in digital literacy through capacity strengthening activities, but also opened doors for future career opportunities and empowered teachers and students with the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital society.



## PRE-SERVICE TRAINING OF A NEW GROUP

Pre-Service Training (PST) provides each new group of Peace Corps Volunteers the essential skills to work, integrate, and live in Cambodian communities effectively. In 2024, Peace Corps conducted 10 weeks of PST in Takeo province for 32 Volunteers. Major topics included English teaching skills, Khmer language and culture, Cambodian history, safety and security, and health.

Before sending the Volunteers to work at schools or teacher training centers across the country, Volunteers learned how to teach in Cambodian schools and integrate into Cambodian culture. During PST, Peace Corps Volunteers learned Khmer language from Language and Culture Facilitators (LCFs) and lived in the community with Khmer host families who gave them the opportunity to practice Khmer language outside of classroom and helped them to adapt to Khmer culture.



Peace Corps Volunteers learning Khmer language

The Technical Trainers were very experienced teachers of English in Cambodia. They provided Volunteers with the teaching skills they need to be successful in Cambodian schools. The Volunteers completed two weeks of practicum and three weeks of community teaching to give them hands on experience before going to their assigned schools.



Practicum and community teach helped Volunteers gain teaching experience



Peace Corps Volunteers also learned some basic life skills to help them to adapt to the realities of life in rural Cambodian communities. They learned basic bike maintenance, how to do laundry by hand, and respectful meal etiquette with their host families.



Learning basic life skills



Volunteers also received extensive training on topics related to health and safety and security to ensure that they stay healthy and safe throughout their service.



Health and safety and security training

# PEACE CORPS TRAININGS

## Supervisor and Counterpart Conference

The Supervisor and Counterpart Conference is an essential event designed to enhance collaboration between Peace Corps Volunteers and their local counterparts. This conference serves as a platform for fostering mutual understanding, sharing experiences, and developing strategies that align the goals of the Peace Corps with the needs of the communities they serve.



In the field of educational development, collaboration between local school directors, counterparts and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) is pivotal for fostering sustainable growth and enhancing the quality of English education. This report highlights a recent conference that brought together school directors and counterparts from various regions, 13 provinces of Cambodia: Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Battambang, Preah Vihear, Tbong Khmum, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Stung Treng, Kampot, Takeo and Kratie, showcasing successful partnerships, innovative practices, and future goals.

### Conference Overview

The annual conference took place at Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh on October 15-16, 2024, attracting over 124 participants, including school directors, counterparts and PCVs. The primary objective was to strengthen the collaboration between local educational authorities and Peace Corps Volunteers by sharing experiences, challenges faced in the field, and strategies for effective partnership.



## Workshops and Breakout Sessions

One of the key components of the conference was a series of workshops focused on enhancing communication skills, Peace Corps approach to development, roles and responsibilities, work expectation, co-teaching, English teaching methodologies, using AI/kahoot in English teaching, secondary project ideas, community integration plan, Volunteer safety and security and cultural competency. For instance, one workshop titled “Cross-Cultural Communication” provided participants with tools to navigate language barriers and cultural differences effectively.



## Success Stories

Many school directors presented success stories highlighting their collaborations with previous PCVs. Here are the two highlights from 2 school directors:



**School Director from Bak Chon Chean High School in Pursat province, Mr. Sum Pharith:**

Shared how a PCV Joleen Xiong helped implement eco school garden project beside teaching English to students.



**School Director from Kirisovannavong Primary School in Kampong Chhnang, Mr. Yin Chandy:**

Besides teaching English to students in grade 4-6, our PCV Jake Upton has built a computer lab in the school library.

These narratives not only inspired participants but also illustrated the tangible impact of collaborative efforts.

## Networking Opportunities

The conference also provided ample networking opportunities. Attendees participated in informal discussions during breaks, allowing them to forge new connections and share resources. Many expressed interests in forming group chat to build relationships between experienced directors and newer ones who are just beginning their journey with PCVs.



The conference concluded with a commitment from all participants to continue fostering collaboration between school directors, counterparts and Peace Corps Volunteers.

The Supervisor and Counterpart Conference proved to be an invaluable experience for all involved. By focusing on collaboration, communication, and community integration, it reinforced the mission of Peace Corps Volunteers: to create lasting change through partnership with local communities. As we move forward into another year of service, we are optimistic about the strengthened relationships formed during this event.



## K16 Host Family Orientation

In Cambodia, the annual host family orientation serves as a cornerstone for fostering connections between Volunteers and their Khmer host families. This year, the event was held at the Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh, where 70 host family members from 13 provinces of Cambodia: Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Battambang, Preah Vihea, Tbong Khmum, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Stung Treng, Kratie, Takeo and Kampot, gathered to learn about their roles and responsibilities while creating an inclusive environment for their Volunteers.



Host families from Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Pursat, Kampong Chhang, Battambang and Preah Vihear

### The Welcome Remark

As host families arrived, they were greeted by our program staff and our Director of Programming and Training (DPT), Michael Keel, who emphasized that host families play a very important role in the success of each Volunteer's service by supporting their community integration and language learning. He emphasized and celebrated Volunteers' various background and perspectives and appreciated host families for welcoming Volunteers into their homes and communities. He also acknowledged that hosting

a Volunteer is not always easy and requires commitment and patience for both the Volunteer and the host family, but Peace Corps' program staff are always available to help with language and cultural barriers and building relationships.



Michael Keel, DPT is welcoming the Khmer Host Families

## Understanding Cultural Differences

Following the welcome session, a workshop on cultural sensitivity was conducted by our Program Managers (PMs). They highlighted common cultural differences that might arise during the hosting experience. "Understanding these differences can help prevent misunderstandings," they explained. Host families participated in interactive activities that simulated various scenarios they might encounter with their Volunteers.



## Safety and Security Practices

Moreover, we provide the safety and security session to our Khmer host families as well led by our Safety and Security Manager (SSM), Reaksmeay Kim and provide them with some tools to use at their homes for safety living.



## Practical Tips for Hosting

Next on the agenda was a practical tips segment led by experienced host family members. Host families, they shared insights on how to create a welcoming home environment, including setting up a comfortable space for Volunteers and involving them in family activities. .



**Host families share their experience**

“ Make them feel like part of your family ”



**one experienced host mother advised**

“ Invite them to dinner and include them in some traditional celebrations. ”

## Communication Strategies

Effective communication was another key topic discussed during the orientation. Host families learned about different communication styles and how to navigate language barriers. A panel discussion featuring current Volunteers, Sarah Mcfadden and Caleb Glon provided firsthand accounts of their experiences living with host families, emphasizing that open dialogue is crucial for building trust. Volunteers shared about how Volunteers are from different backgrounds even they are American. In America, difference families have different cultures, and they gave some examples about the different of how they use one hand to give the gift, and it is alright in America but in Cambodia is not appropriated.



Sarah Mcfadden and Caleb Glon share their experiences

The orientation concluded with a networking session where host families could connect with each other and share contact information. Many expressed enthusiasms about forming friendships not only with their Volunteers but also among fellow hosts. As families left the venue, they carried with them not just knowledge but also a sense of community spirit that would enhance their hosting experience throughout the year.

This annual report highlights how essential orientations are in preparing host families for successful intercultural exchanges, ensuring that both hosts and Volunteers benefit from this enriching experience.

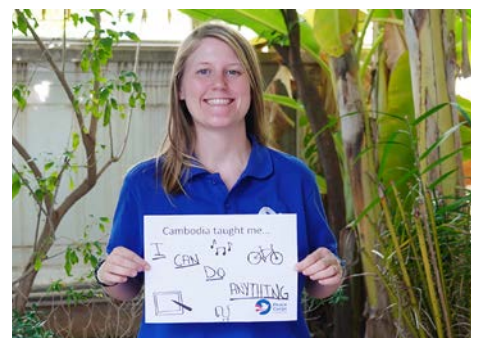






## A Reflection of Time in Cambodia

Comfort, resiliency, love, positivity, smile, community, appreciation, strength, memory, patience, family, home...



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