



ANNUAL REPORT

2025



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WELCOME TO

Cambodia
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World Peace and Friendship

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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 18 years working with Cambodian officials, counterparts, education institutions, and building relationships with families, communities and with individuals.

2025 was an extraordinary year filled with unprecedented challenges for Cambodian communities across the country. It is with great honor and pride that we have supported our Volunteers in serving their host communities through this hardship, and we have been inspired by the dedication of Cambodian communities to come together to support each other.

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 2025 through this annual report.

PEACE CORPS GLOBAL OVERVIEW

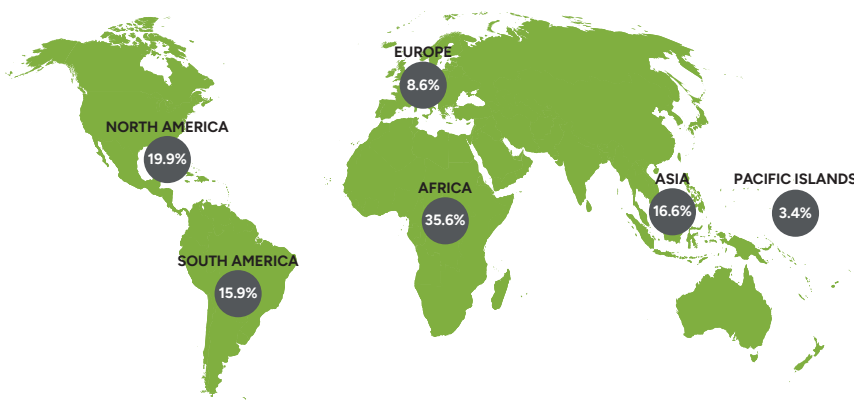
The Peace Corps sends Americans abroad on behalf of the United States to tackle the pressing needs of people around the world. Volunteers work at the grassroots level to develop sustainable solutions and address challenges in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health, and youth development. Through their service, they 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 remains committed to promoting world peace and friendship. Since its founding in 1961, more than 240,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 144 countries and worked collaboratively to build relationships and exchange cultures and knowledge with counterparts and community members. Today, Peace Corps Volunteers put their purpose, passion, and skills to work in support of community-led development and intercultural exchange. Service opens a world of possibilities that develops Volunteers' skills, experiences, and aspirations.

Our Three Goals:

1. To help the countries interested in meeting their need for trained people.
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.



Peace Corps Today

- 60+ countries served
- 3,000+ Volunteers and Trainees
- 56.29% female,
- 43.71% male
- 28 average age of Volunteer
- 7.16% Volunteers over 50

PEACE CORPS IN CAMBODIA

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

Since the project opened in 2007, there have been 776 Volunteers who have served in Cambodia. 563 have been English teacher Volunteers and 213 were community health education Volunteers. Peace Corps currently has one technical project in Cambodia – English Teaching and Teacher Training.

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 Volunteers



- 61 Current Volunteers
- 31 Female
- 30 Male
- 1 PCVL
- 1 PTTC
- 31 High Schools
- 6 Lower Secondary Schools
- 22 Primary Schools

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.

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 2025

Increase capacity of teachers to use English and general teaching skills



267

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

93%

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

Increase achievement of students in English and life skills



698

Number of classes that Volunteers teach students

24811
(F: 13236)

Number of students taught English in a school setting

626

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

83%

Percentage of students who demonstrate achievement in an English course

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



710

Number of community members involved in school facility improvement projects

100%

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

EDUCATION SUCCESS STORY

Vitou's Superpower by PCV Jacob Cropp in Stung Treng

In my 4th grade class, I have a student named Vitou. He is one of the sweetest kids I have ever met and, without exaggeration, one of the most interesting people I have encountered. One thing about Vitou is that he can talk endlessly. Whether you engage with him or try to brush him off, he will always find a way to keep the conversation going. It feels like a superpower. While I have met other talkative people before, none compare to Vitou in terms of insight, energy, and curiosity.



What truly sets him apart is not just how much he talks, but the substance of what he says. His English is phenomenal for his age, and his thoughts are often nuanced and mature. It can be a challenge in class, but when you give him space to speak, he often has something meaningful to share. That said, Vitou does not participate much in class in the traditional sense. When he does, it is usually to make a joke or ask me unrelated questions because he already understands the lesson. It definitely keeps me on my toes during class 4D, and I am always trying to find a balance between keeping structure and appreciating the energy he brings.

One moment that stands out happened during a meeting with my community director and some other teachers. We were working on a preliminary budget for a grant to build a playground. As usual, Vitou came in looking to talk. At first, we gently asked him to leave, but he quickly picked up on what we were discussing and started sharing his thoughts. To our surprise, he had incredibly thoughtful suggestions about what students would want, what materials were available in the community, and how the design could better suit the needs of the kids. He became a real asset in that moment, and I was blown away by how sharp and mature his input was.

I am incredibly proud of Vitou and the other students at school. They are intelligent, insightful, and full of potential. I feel lucky to be part of their education and their lives, and they inspire me to be a better teacher and role model for others.





Building Blocks of Success by PCV Uyen Tran in Pursat

When my counterpart and I were planning strategies for our senior students' National Exam, we found it challenging yet doable due to the positive shift in students' mindset and behaviors. This proud moment motivated us to continue the hard work with determination despite the obstacles stacked against us as educators. Consistent sum of efforts from both teachers and students really lead to noticeable progress that is gaining the momentum we hope for.

Last November, intriguing patterns and student behaviors resulted in a discussion with the Khmer teachers. Most students were very shy, were reluctant to engage in class activities for weeks, or were disruptive. Students were reluctant to express their own opinions or their personalities during our ice breaker activities. They had the same answers for our questions, even though we redirected the questions in Khmer for a different response.

Soon enough I observed that the learning environment was a really teacher-centered style. The teacher talked and students waited to be given answers and knowledge. Furthermore, I observed that the kids were under great pressure to be perfectionists, hence, I sat down with the Khmer teachers who were going to be my partners at school to address these patterns. We identified what support they needed and what their expectations were. I have experienced teaching partners, so we could focus more on students as well as let the Khmer teachers practice what they want to improve in a holistic approach.

Firstly, I started introducing more creative assignments and activities whenever a lesson allowed. This type of engagement is low-barrier, fun and inclusive. It helps students of all levels learn about self-expression, problem solving, and critical thinking. Another great benefit is the trust and rapport we gain. The quiet or naughty kids enjoy it, and they proudly show me their works. The rooms are in order and they are focused on the activities instead of causing trouble. We do not need to force the process. Students learn to open up to us and express their ideas better. Beyond that, they have started to share with us more about themselves. I learn about their hobbies, talents, dreams, personalities and even family background and personal challenges. They also appreciate the mental break while doing these fun tasks to refresh from their stressful schedule. The classes have become more manageable, and participation from new faces has shown improvements.

Similarly, the Khmer teachers let me be playful during idle time in class. We allow students to use slang and internet trends to explain the lesson vocabulary. They like that it is practical and fun to explore outside the textbooks. When they see fun catchphrases and trendy language, they show better focus for vocab in a cultural context, so we try to make connections to their lessons so that they can retain the info. Class engagement has gone up since we started to have more fun and use language they have interest in learning.

While we incorporated the fun, we made sure it was a safe learning environment. Small actions like a thank you for any efforts or contribution to the session works well. Also, we pay more attention to positivity to replace accusatory words with detailed instruction to set clear expectations and boundaries for students to follow. Other easy actions are to be physically on the same level of students to really listen to them when they try to say something, or we let them get help from other friends to come up with the answer together. This is a technique to work with young children, but it is still applicable for high school students, especially for shy, nervous ones that we have. Students are eager to be a part of the classroom, and they even call out disruptive behaviors as they feel seen and acknowledged in class for their words. These students feel supported and have a sense of belonging to learn with their friends, so activities are not intimidating or boring anymore. It is successful when kids feel safe and comfortable taking risks. Thus, I have started to see their faces in more class activities and tasks. My counterparts have been more open to improving the learning environment with me after seeing good results. They understand that they can be both firm and kind with alternative yet effective techniques so that they use less corporal punishment and yelling. When teachers treat their students, especially high school age, with more respect, they are more likely to reciprocate with respect and cooperation.

The impacts are growing beyond our expectations. Consistent and easy to maintain actions compound the effects. In all classes, we see a higher rate of participation. Some classes can be up to 100%. I consistently see new faces who volunteer in class to help their friends, contribute to the class discussion, ask questions, and make an effort to find out how to complete a task or assignment. The most exciting progress is that students gradually express their own opinions and ideas. We as teachers keep them on the edge of their seats to help them express their thoughts and refine their thinking process with our feedback and recognition for their hard work. Finally, we have seen that more students are willing to join class activities even if it is still uncomfortable. They slowly try to practice or engage instead of sleeping, or leaving their seats to interrupt the sessions. We hope these building blocks set a solid foundation of progress to help us achieve our goals together.



My Favorite Hour of the Week! by PCV Lavarina Nazarino in Kampong Chhnang

“Teacher! Teacher! Are you teaching art today?” one of my 5th grade students shouts at me in the middle of class. He is standing up in the back of the classroom, waving at me to get my attention. Even though he should be sitting in his chair copying the board, my face lit up with a wide smile.

“Yes! It’ll be over there at 1 o’clock,” I respond in Khmer with my thick American accent, pointing in the general direction of our meeting spot. I am not very good at remembering the name of the building, but by now, the students know I am referring to the teacher’s meeting room.

“Yay!” A few of my students exclaim. While I know not all of them will show up, it warms my heart to see the enthusiasm the students show me for my little club.

I remember the day that I worked up the courage to ask the school director for the key to the meeting room, so I could teach my art club every Friday. My school director seemed confused about my desire to teach art to the students during lunch hours, since clubs and after-school activities don’t exist at my school. Once he understood the purpose of a club and my goals for it, he was happy to hand over the key and support it.

Since then, I have been hosting my art club every Friday, during the last hour of lunch break. In my first few weeks, I was a bit overwhelmed by the number of students who attended from my 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. I had very few supplies to offer and not a lot of ideas on what to teach. On my first day, I printed out pictures of cute houses and coffee shops for them to color in. We even attempted to do origami together the next week; however, teaching fifty primary students all together how to fold a crane is a near impossible task. In the end, only three students succeeded. Since then, I have taught and encouraged them to draw animals, flowers, mountains, houses, etc. I’ve slowly built up my art supplies, buying colored pencils, crayons, and markers when I find them for a good price. While less students show up every week than my first month, I have settled into a routine with my students. They seem happy to spend their final lunch hour with me drawing whatever the prompt is for that week, and I am happy to get to be creative with my students.

To me, my art club isn’t just about students learning art. It’s about giving them a space to express themselves, push themselves outside of their perfectionist mindsets, and build confidence in themselves and their work. My art club brings me the most joy in my week, and I am proud of my students and their commitment to it.



SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Peace Corps' approach to development is to help people strengthen their capacity to address their community's real needs, mobilize community resources, and strengthen skills through participatory analysis for community action. After attending the Project Design and Management Trainings in Phnom Penh, PCVs and their counterparts worked closely on project proposal development and implementation within their communities. In 2025, there were nine community-led project proposals awarded to PCVs and counterparts, which they implemented at their schools in six different provinces. The total cost of the nine project proposals was \$54,063; the small grants program of Peace Corps funded \$39,750 and the community also contributed about \$14,316, which was 26% of the total cost. Here are the projects that PCVs and Schools implemented: 2 Basketball Court projects, 3 School Environment Improvement projects, 2 School Gardens projects 1 Computer Lab project, 1 WASH project.

Community Driven-Secondary Projects

Improving Hygiene in the Community by PCV Anyar Bloom in Battambang

One lower secondary school in Cambodia found themselves with out-of-use handwashing stations and high student absence rates due to communicable illnesses. In response, the school and Volunteer designed a three-part plan to improve the school's WASH infrastructure and educate the community about handwashing. The first step - get the handwashing stations working again. The school received a grant to build a water tower and connect it to the handwashing stations and some unused bathrooms, getting water flowing again. A solar panel pump ensures the tower's longevity - it will not need to be switched off due to burdensome electricity bills. The school then gathered volunteers to clean up and beautify the areas around the bathrooms. They repainted the bathroom, planted flowers, and repaired rusted-out doors and roofs.

With the water working and the hygiene areas cleaned up, the last step was to ensure that students (and teachers!) knew when and how to use the handwashing stations. At



the beginning of the new school year, all the teachers were trained to deliver a handwashing workshop that they then taught to the students. The school will repeat the workshops every year, to ensure that each new group of students continues to use the hand washing stations.

School and Education Improvement Project by PCV Victoria Centeno in Kampong Cham



At a rural primary school in Kampong Cham, the community, including teachers, staff, and students, collaborated on a project to enhance the learning environment. Key initiatives included installing filing cabinets for better material organization, expanding the library with new bookshelves and a whiteboard, upgrading lighting for improved focus, and introducing supplemental English materials for literacy development. This effort showcased remarkable teamwork and dedication among all members involved.

The results of the project demonstrated significant improvements in the school environment, facilitating easier lesson planning for teachers and encouraging library usage among students. Enhanced classroom conditions, including better lighting and supplemental materials, bolstered engagement. The initiative fostered creativity, collaboration, and practical skills in project management for all participants, with students taking active roles in resource management. Sustainability was prioritized through durable materials and established maintenance roles, with ongoing monitoring to ensure lasting benefits. Challenges were addressed through flexibility and commitment from the community, ultimately enhancing confidence and leadership capacities for future projects.

I am deeply thankful to have been a part of this project. Witnessing the dedication, creativity, and teamwork of the school community has been incredibly rewarding and being able to contribute to an effort that directly benefits students' learning and growth is an experience I will always value. This project demonstrates the power of community effort. Through collaboration, creativity, and persistence, teachers, staff, and students transformed their learning environment into a space that motivates, supports, and inspires. It is a testament to what can be achieved when a school community comes together with dedication, teamwork, and a shared vision for learning.



Computer Lab Story by PCV Yondonjamts Jigjidsuren in Banteay Meanchey

One of the most important assets to have in our developing and changing world is to have access to computers and ITC skills. You might think that everyone has access to computers, the internet, and smart phones today. However, there are still so many people who don't. This issue is most prevalent in rural schools where there might be a difference in resources and lack of access, which can widen the divide between urban and rural students.



My school started thinking about ways to improve the quality of education in a different way. We realized that everything is tied to education, whether it be resources or access to basic nutrition, healthcare, hygiene, or computing skills. It was notable that my school did not have a computer lab, but the two surrounding schools did. After we decided to construct a new computer lab, my counterpart and I started to think about the steps we would need to take to establish it. However, we were told that this was a large feat, especially due to the cost associated with it. I didn't want to give up so when it came time to attend the Peace Corps Project Design and Management training, I knew that I had the support of my school director to develop the computer lab.

Upon returning from training in March 2024, we decided to repurpose a vacant classroom, which was previously used for storage, instead of constructing a new room. Collaborating with my school director and a counterpart, we began clearing out the space. To address budget constraints, we actively sought donations while community members enlisted electricians and painters to assist. Concurrently, an ITC teacher located a computer shop in Cambodia, where 20 computers were purchased at an educational discount. Fundraising efforts concluded successfully within three months, allowing for the computers to be shipped to Banteay Meanchey, marking a significant step in the project's development.

In the year following the grant from Peace Corps, a fully functioning computer lab with 20 computers was established, equipped with projectors and necessary technology for a complete learning environment. After setting up, the IT teacher conducted tests, allowing the development of curriculum workshops. Tenth graders were the first to utilize the lab, with over 30 students learning typing, PowerPoint creation, and document handling within a semester. Additionally, a community leader organized workshops for



older teachers and staff, enabling more than 20 educators aged 35 to 50 to enhance their computing skills through weekly one-hour sessions. This initiative, which began as a dream, successfully engaged over 60 students and 20 teachers, fulfilling the desire to make a significant impact beyond merely teaching English in the community.

Basketball Court Story by PCV Alexandra Baker in Banteay Meanchey

At a primary school in Banteay Meanchey, it was evident that the students loved to play sports during their recess and after school time, but could not practice when heavy rains occurred and would flood the school. Not only is exercising important for encouraging health, but also sports teach students teamwork, cooperation, and communication. The PCV and school director worked together to create the basketball court that exists today. They both attended Peace Corps' Project Design and Management workshop and then immediately set to work to draw the plans for the court.

Once fundraising was complete, the court was built in 10 days' time, specifically using local vendors that the school director had connections to. The school built two types of basketball hoops, one that was the standard height, and one at a lower height so younger students could use the court as well. The school also built a large bleacher-style seating area so that students could sit and watch their peers play on the court.



Once the basketball court was completed, it was clear that the students and teachers were excited about the new court. After the PCV and school purchased the basketballs, students came rushing into the teacher's office every day to check out the balls. Also, a group of three teachers asked the PCV to start staying after school to play basketball together and to exercise on the court. This became a regular activity from 5:00-5:30 every day, which also encouraged some students to stay after school and play. Similarly, the PCV conducted a short training to introduce basketball drills to teachers from multiple primary schools. The teachers were provided with a packet created by the PCV with different games that could be played on the court, which would further supplement the physical education guide from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. After the completion of this training, many teachers implemented these techniques during their PE class.



The most evident capacity and skills built were teamwork, responsibility, and cooperation among the students. Students learned how to take responsibility for the balls, such as making sure all 10 balls were in the basket before locking them up, and signing their names in a book when they checked a ball out. Originally, students would fight over who used the balls, but then they slowly learned how to cooperate and share to play together.

The main activities on the court are weekly PE classes, free-time ball play, basketball check-in/check-out, and teacher exercise. Events are also sometimes held on the court because it gives sufficient space for large gatherings as well as stays above the flooding during the rainy season. This grant impacted over 900 students in supporting their physical fitness and capacity building, as well as over 30 teachers participating in some part of the grant or training. Because it is expected that students share what they learned at school with their families and friends, it is assumed that there are over 1,800 indirect beneficiaries from this grant.

This court was supported by the local and national government, but it was clear that due to the hard work of the school director and the school, the dream of a basketball court became a reality.

PRE-PREPARING FOR SERVICE

Upon arrival in Cambodia, Peace Corps Volunteers receive extensive language, culture, health, safety, and technical training. Peace Corps provides training opportunities to Volunteers to improve their language and technical skills throughout their services.

Training for the Volunteers

Pre-Service training	Upon arrival
In-Service training	After 3 months at site
Project Design and Management training	After 5 months at site
Mid-Service training	After 12 months at site
Completion of Service conference	After 20 months at site

Pre-Service Training (PST) for K17s in August 2025

25 Trainees of the 17th cohort of Peace Corps Cambodia Volunteers (K17) arrived on August 4, 2025, and participated in the 10-week PST program until October 9, 2025. They trained and lived in Tram Kak district, Takeo province, with support from local authorities, communities, host-families, and Peace Corps staff. After completing this required training, the K17s swore in as Peace Corps Volunteers on October 10, 2025.

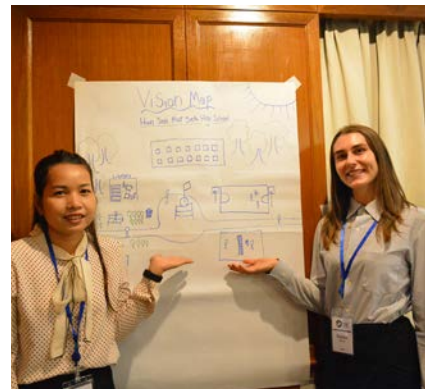
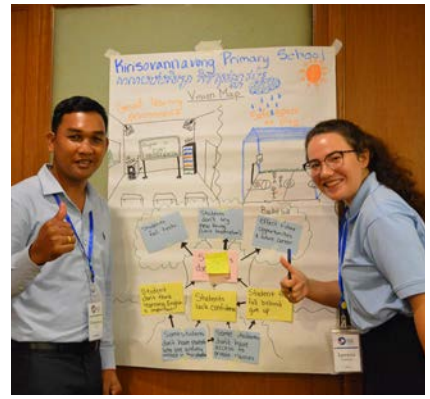
The topics covered in PST included soft and hard skills that will assist Volunteers in their professional service. Through developing new technical skills in English teaching, intercultural and Khmer language skills, adaptability to service and community, personal health, safety and security, and willingness to learn from and collaborate with others, Volunteers are able to maximize their capabilities and experiences at site. The PST training thoughtfully considers Volunteers' skills and motivations with a competent training team of experienced educators. The K17 cohort has successfully accomplished their training with confidence, and will continue their service at permanent sites in 13 different provinces across Cambodia.



In-Service Training (IST) for K16s in January 2025

The purpose of IST is to support Volunteers by providing additional language, technical, and cultural training, as well as facilitating discussions surrounding service and motivation. This is an opportunity for Volunteers to rediscover their motivation for their service, as well as empower them to collaborate with community stakeholders in a sustainable manner. The group was incredibly excited to come together and collaborate once again and were very enthusiastic about returning to their schools across Cambodia.





Project Design and Management (PDM) Training for Volunteers and their Counterparts in March 2025

PCVs and their counterparts learned new skills and strategies together on how to identify the needs of their community, address core challenges, and develop community-led projects to implement at their sites. As a result, PCVs and Counterparts share a common understanding about their community and are equipped with tools to develop a project proposal and manage a community project together.

Mid-Service Training for K16s in November 2025



Completion of Service (COS) Conference for K15s in September 2025



Training for Community Members

Peace Corps Cambodia also trains community members who will be hosting and supporting Volunteers including host families, school teachers, supervisors, and counterparts.

Host Family Orientation for new batch in September 2025

Peace Corps invited 52 host family members from 11 provinces in Cambodia: Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Stung Treng, Kratie, Takeo and Kampot. They gathered to learn about their roles and responsibilities in creating a supportive environment for their Volunteers. The orientation aimed to prepare host families for their role in supporting Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) and to foster a successful cultural exchange experience, support systems, and communication.



Primary Counterpart Training in September 2025

Primary school teachers who would be working with Volunteers at their schools participated in a two-day workshop focused on English instruction for primary students. During this workshop, they learned about the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport's primary school English curriculum and discovered fundamental techniques for teaching English, collaborative teaching strategies with Volunteers, and assessment methods for teaching. The participants co-planned and co-taught with their Volunteers, putting their new knowledge into practice.



Supervisor and Counterpart conference in September 2025

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 provinces such as Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Stung Treng, Kampot, Takeo, and Kratie, showcasing successful partnerships, innovative practices, and future goals.

Ms. Prom Solorn, the director of Hun Sen Rolous Secondary School, shared her valuable experience in effectively managing Volunteers. She emphasized that when hosting Volunteers, it is important to consider them as part of the school's team, regularly check-in with them, inspire them, and address the gaps related to intercultural communication.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM VOLUNTEERS

English Club During School Break by PCV Catherine Cramer in Takeo

At the end of the school year, my school director and counterpart approached me with the idea of starting an English Club. The program would run during the school break and focus on high school students. I was excited for the chance to do more community outreach, but also a bit nervous. My experience so far had been with primary students, and the last time I had worked with older learners was during PST practicum. Still, I welcomed the challenge and got to work.



My counterpart graciously helped advertise the club at the private school where he teaches, and I created infographics to share on Facebook. Spreading the word was important to reach motivated students from the community, and I was pleasantly surprised by the response.

The first day served as registration and orientation. I wanted to see how many students were interested and what age group I'd primarily be working with. To my surprise, around thirty participants showed up, mostly tenth graders and a few local teachers.

When I asked what they wanted to focus on, the overwhelming response was "speaking practice." Reflecting on common challenges I'd noticed in previous conversations, I decided to center the club on building confidence in speaking and developing conversational fluency.

We met three times a week for two hours. The first hour was structured, focused on introducing vocabulary, pronunciation, and example conversations. I often modeled dialogues, acted out skits, or gave cultural context to certain English phrases. The second hour was when the energy really came alive. We spent that time practicing through games, group discussions, and role plays. I introduced some of my favorite language games that encouraged movement and creativity, but the students also taught me games they grew up playing, which we adapted into English-speaking activities.

Teaching older students required me to shift my approach. I quickly learned that my usual teaching style, very energetic and animated for younger learners, needed some adjustment. While primary students mirror my enthusiasm, high schoolers initially seemed intimidated by it. I had to find a balance between being engaging and composed. Through some trial, laughter, and self-reflection, I found my rhythm and learned a great deal about humility and adaptability.



Over the course of the month, I watched my students transform from shy and hesitant speakers into more confident, expressive communicators. Seeing them take risks with their English and support one another reminded me of why I love teaching. It's not just about language, but about connection, growth, and shared courage.

Learning New Ways to Care for Family in Cambodia by PCV Caleb Williams in Prey Veng

Cultural integration is highlighted in Peace Corps' second goal, "to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans," but it wasn't until I had been living with my host family that I began to realize just how deeply this element of service could impact my life. After several months of village family life (enough to feel fully integrated into the family culture) I thought that I had completed integration and understood the family culture of my host family, but they still find ways to surprise me by the way they demonstrate their care.

After going through some turbulence with family in the U.S. and experiencing some uncomfortable encounters with people in my community, I felt discouraged and unmotivated, causing me to retreat into myself. My family noticed, and when they asked me what was wrong, I hesitantly told them that I didn't have the words in Khmer to explain the problem faced by my American family. However, I did explain the distressing encounter in my village, which was easier to explain and less private. They immediately rallied around me, encouraging me and helping me find solutions. My aunt in particular took the lead and taught me about cultural practices she implements when she's distressed. She told me that she goes to the local wat (temple) and has the Buddhist monk do a cleansing ceremony with water ("sraoch tuek"). She also told me that I should wear a "khsae changkĕh" (a kind of adorned rope worn around the waist under one's clothes) to help prevent negative experiences with others around and for good fortune in my career. Once I agreed to her proposal, she brought me to the wat for the ceremony, ensuring that I had the money to offer to the monk for the khsae, which I still wear to this day.



These experiences taught me that even though my host family did not fully understand all the challenges I was facing, they understood how I felt, and they used the strategies they have to care for me, even if I did not fully understand them because of my lack of cultural background. Despite the fact that we did not fully understand each other's problems and practices, we understood the love and intent behind our actions, and when I allowed myself to trust my host family with challenges I was facing, their care for me provided a sense of renewed energy and resiliency that will help me persevere through challenges until the end of my service and beyond.







A Reflection of Time in Cambodia

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



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