



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**

**BOENG MEALEA, TA SIEM,
KANTUOT, & TROPEANG PRASAT**

CAMBODIA

YEAR END REPORT

JANUARY 2021

PREPARED BY
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INTRODUCTION



The communities of Boeng Mealea, Ta Siem, Kantuot, and Tropeang Prasat are each working hard, with a vision of becoming thriving, abundant communities, living and working harmoniously together.

FH Cambodia is walking alongside 35 communities of over 8,000 households within these four different regions, encouraging and supporting them on their journey toward self-sustainability. The Boeng Mealea communities will graduate in 2024, Ta Siem in 2025, and both Kantuot and Tropeang Prasat in 2026. The Child Focused Community Transformation (CFCT) development model is being implemented, consisting of four focus sectors including education, health, livelihoods, and leadership training, supported by a strong child sponsorship program. This model is rooted in the philosophy that a community that can care well for its most vulnerable—its children—is a healthy community. This combined approach empowers each community in a way that is holistic, integrated, and relational.

-  **Boeng Mealea, Ta Siem, Kantuot, & Tropeang Prasat**
-  **35 Communities**
-  **8,017 Families**
-  **39,920 Population**

COVID-19 UPDATE

Due to the onset of COVID-19, activities in all four sectors within the community development approach have been altered. **Despite the threat of COVID-19, leadership teams and their volunteers have remained steadfast and are helping their communities manage the impact of the pandemic.** The community leaders were trained by FH staff on the general facts of the virus, including how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. After the training sessions, the leaders were encouraged to distribute the knowledge they gained to the rest of the communities through phone calls, home visits (using physical distancing), and loudspeakers. They were also encouraged to plan an awareness campaign and distribute story booklets to children and youth in their communities. Through these initiatives, leadership teams have been able to reach 450 youth volunteers and 4,219 children.

The bright side of the economic hardship caused by the pandemic has been the ways 73 Savings and Loans groups are assisting their members. Economic hardship has also allowed FH Cambodia to reach some of the poorest households that the government wasn't able to reach. They were able to bless them with food and also mentoring sessions on how to grow their own vegetables and use composting techniques to avoid extra expenses. Although many people have lost their jobs due to the pandemic, this time has brought families together in the communities. The extra time provided as people are forced to stay at home has allowed families to bond, working together over vegetable gardening and animal raising.

In order to provide much-needed services during the pandemic, FH Cambodia has worked with communities, local stakeholders, and relevant authorities—like health centres—to build sustainable partnerships. Through these partnerships, FH Cambodia has provided personal protective equipment to four health centres and six public offices. FH staff spent time reviewing previous health lessons with some community members, including water, sanitation, and hygiene (aka WASH) while providing handwashing posters for them to take home for use in teaching their neighbours. Children in the communities were included in the process of promoting proper handwashing by supplying them with bars of soap and by installing handwashing stations in their children's clubs.

ACTIVITIES

3000L of disinfectant (alcohol) and **48** boxes of face masks provided to four health centres

3000L of disinfectant (alcohol) and **30** boxes of face masks provided to six public offices

Large-scale awareness and education campaign to stop the spread of COVID-19

INVOLVEMENT IN COVID-19 AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Community	No. of Leaders, Volunteers, & Cascade Group Members Trained on COVID-19 Essential Lessons				# of Leaders & Volunteers Trained on Social Distancing	# of Children Educated on COVID-19
	Group Members	Volunteer Leaders	Volunteer Youth Leaders	Total		
Boeng Mealea	847	58	60	965	197	715
Ta Siem	2,919	100	210	3,229	448	758
Kantuot	1,145	75	47	1,267	151	835
Tropeang Prasat	4,514	429	133	5,076	513	1,911
TOTAL	9,425	662	450	9,875	1,309	4,219

EDUCATION

FH Cambodia aims to equip children with literacy, numeracy, and life skills. To help achieve these goals, the staff at FH Cambodia have built relationships with numerous local leaders, parents, and teachers. The strong friendships created through these interactions has had the added benefit of allowing FH staff access to new training materials for preschools and primary schools from the Ministry of Education. Schools are federally funded in Cambodia, so FH Cambodia focuses on preschool education to ensure that children are well prepared to start primary school.

In addition to the preschools, and since help for students is not always available at home, FH Cambodia has established 39 children clubs throughout the communities. Some communities have buildings for their children's clubs along with libraries, while others still meet in hallways for their classes. To ensure that children improve both their reading and literary skills, FH staff have trained teacher volunteers on storytelling during club time and using flashcards to improve numeracy skills.



“Before I was so shy, had no friends. I did not know how to draw. I did not even study.... But I got involved in Youth workshops. I learned how to play the flute, how to draw, how to write a letter, how to role play in stories (acting), I help my parents do the housework... my life has changed alot!”

— Khon, **Student, Beoung Mealea**

Because of the government's restriction on gatherings during the pandemic, the children's clubs (including the club meal served by mother volunteers) have been temporarily paused. Schools in Cambodia were closed in March, with teaching moved to e-learning, and have just reopened on November 1 with limitations on class sizes and hours. Because of these sudden changes and uncertainties, many children have experienced high levels of stress and anxiety. **To support these children, FH Cambodia trained caregivers on how to help their children reduce stress while they're at home.** The training sessions included the topics of how to talk to children about COVID-19, how to spend quality time with them, how to create a structure for children, and how to keep children engaged with exciting activities. FH staff also spent time reaching out to youth and working with them on how to cope with mental health challenges.



Receiving an encouraging letter from a child sponsor in Canada, and writing them back, is a regular highlight for children.

ACTIVITIES



39

Children's Clubs active and conducting learning activities

TRAINING CAREGIVER AND YOUTH VOLUNTEERS ON HOW TO COPE IN THE PANDEMIC

Community	# of Parents Trained in Coping with COVID-19	# of Attendees at Workshops on Parenting Tips During COVID-19 (attended at least 75% of lessons)	# of Attendees at Workshops on Roles of Youth/Teacher Volunteers in Mitigating the Spread of COVID-19	# of Youth or Teacher Volunteers Trained on Strategies on Mental Health & Psycho-social Support
Boeng Mealea	67	47	30	0
Ta Siem	28	56	210	210
Kantuot	68	68	39	39
Tropeang Prasat	97	116	285	218
TOTAL	260	287	564	467



This health group volunteer walks their young pupil through COVID-19 awareness. Educating families on COVID-19 is one way FH is helping to reduce stress among children during the global pandemic.



HEALTH

FH Cambodia aims to improve the health of everyone in the communities, particularly the children. This goal is achieved through the leaders of the Cascade groups who promote positive health practices, hygiene and sanitation, proper food handling, breastfeeding, and prevention of common illnesses like dengue fever, chikungunya, and malaria.

The Leader Mothers who run the 38 Cascade groups along with their 376 volunteers don't just promote these health practices but also model them so as to encourage other women in their communities. The involvement of these mothers in the Cascade health groups both empowers them at the community level and also the family level.



“Before, my family faced many challenges—diarrhea and (skin) diseases, we didn't have clean water, and many unsolved problems in my village. I joined to attend different trainings, and (I learned) about domestic violence, the disadvantages to drugs, and about raising pigs and chickens. My children are (now) polite, I get more money to support my family, and we sleep under nets. Sometimes we picnic outside.”

— Lang Loearn, **Farmer, Kantuot**

Before the onset of COVID-19, volunteer mothers were helping their communities by feeding 573 children a nutritious meal in children's clubs. **This program will continue once children's clubs are able to resume.** The vegetables and other ingredients used for this program come from their shared vegetables grown in their individual home gardens. Before the pandemic paused the program, the children's clubs were used to train 2,298 children and youth on good sanitation and hygiene and help children with homework.

In addition to COVID-19, Cambodia has been experiencing a particularly heavy rainy season this year that has increased the scare of Dengue fever and chikungunya virus (commonly spread through mosquitoes) within the communities. FH staff has therefore provided awareness campaigns to both volunteer mothers and local leaders on how to detect and prevent Dengue fever and chikungunya virus.



Handwashing tips and training—and ultimately healthier families—is reason enough for this health group to smile!

ACTIVITIES



38

Cascade groups made up of **376** volunteers actively promoting life-saving health and hygiene lessons and tips

WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH) EDUCATION SUMMARY

Community	# of Leaders, Group Members, & Volunteers Trained in WASH	# of Training Workshops in Children's Clubs or Meeting Halls	# of Children Received Hygiene Kits	# of Volunteers Received Handwashing Posters
Boeng Mealea	52	14	715	74
Ta Siem	108	14	758	47
Kantuot	57	14	847	83
Tropeang Prasat	474	68	2,261	151
TOTAL	691	110	4581	355



Srey, a child volunteer with a health group, teaches her younger siblings the proper way to wash their hands.



A leader on the community development committee demonstrates how to use a handwashing tank.



LIVELIHOODS

FH Cambodia aims to see households build a sustainable source of income that can provide sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for the whole family. **By sustaining a steady income through Saving and Loans groups, financial literacy, micro-enterprises, and income-generating projects, households can meet their families' basic needs and provide for their children's education.** The 73 saving groups that are established in these communities are helping by giving loans towards crop growing, livestock raising, small businesses, health, and much more.

As small-farm agriculture is foundational within the communities, 384 community members have been trained on improved agriculture techniques while 38 Cascade farming groups are working with another 451 volunteer farmers helping them improve their farming methods. The heavy rain from this year has allowed the gardens to thrive and produce good vegetables.



“Before, we did not understand the importance of saving. We did not get much crop due to <a> lack of understanding... which caused my family to suffer. Through many lessons and activities, I've changed. I speak out, I am a role model, I manage my savings group's budget... I know how to properly plant crops and raise animals—lessons I share with my neighbours.”

— Ith Nin, **Farmer, Trapeang Prasat**

A special Farmers Agriculture Supply cooperative started up in Prey Sa Ark 2019 under FH's tutelage, and they have now enjoyed their first full year. Sixty members enjoy learning together, supporting one another's farming and business endeavours, and they have even opened up a supply depot (of sorts) that provides them with local access to supplies such as organic fertilizers, pesticides, rice seeds, and planting supplements.



A savings group discusses a recent financial lesson during one of their regular meetings.



Preparing healthy starter seedlings has led to stronger, healthier gardens and a faster turnaround of nutritious crops.

Families are also improving their income through community credit groups, women and youth groups, agriculture supply shops, and even a shop owned by people with disabilities. Children are the future leaders of these communities, and FH staff has also focused on training children and youth in agricultural skills through school gardening projects.

ACTIVITIES

- 70 Savings and Loans groups actively saving and lending money (+ 3 groups who have stopped temporarily)—65% of members are women
- 6 Community Credit groups organized to offer low-interest loans to community members
- 60 Farming Families participating in a Farmers Agriculture Supply cooperative



384 farmers trained on improved agriculture techniques

38 Cascade farming groups coaching **451** volunteers farmers





LEADERSHIP

In order for communities to achieve their development goals, community leaders need to be empowered to solve their own development problems through strengthening their leadership capacity and skills. In the first half of this year, the different communities had 343 Community Development Committee (CDC) members where 176 of them were trained in servant leadership to pursue peace and justice for their people.

Before the onset of COVID-19, many communities were able to check off goals on their community transformation plan. These accomplishments included a pond fenced off for the safety of the children, a water pipe system committee surveyed and repaired a pipe, a nursery reviewed and approved for more tree replanting, a latrine facility completed for a children’s club, and a road fixed and made ready for use by the community.

Since Cambodia was ravaged by an exceptionally heavy rainy season this year, FH staff trained 194 leaders in disaster risk reduction. When a community in Tropeang Prasat lost a bridge due to the rising water levels, the leaders came together and fixed it. When the communities of Kantuot and Kna Krao saw their roads washed away by heavy rain, local leaders worked together to fix the problem. The initiative and action shown by the leadership in each of the 32 communities this year has been incredibly encouraging and demonstrates their strength and ability to guide their communities through this time—an important marker on the road to graduation.

ACTIVITIES

194 Community Leaders trained in disaster risk reduction strategies



176

Community Development Committee members trained on servant leadership



A BETTER LIFE FOR HER CHILDREN

Vouch Sor is a volunteer caregiver trained by FH Cambodia. Caregivers' primary focus is improving the lives of the children in their village and includes education on children's mental and emotional development, health and hygiene, and nutrition. In addition, Sor and her husband participated in agricultural training to improve their family's income and food security. These days, health and hygiene lessons also include how to protect herself, her family, and her community from COVID-19.

Before partnering with FH, Sor explains how her family was struggling in poverty. "Ten years ago when we arrived in this village, we were having a very difficult life. We built a house which can provide us shelter but we did not have any latrine...My eldest son at that time was 15 years old and dropped out of school.... Moreover, during those times, we were living day by day to just survive. We did not give so much attention to the education of our children. [We thought] as long as we can eat every day and we have a house to sleep, we were fine."

After attending meetings with FH staff and fellow villagers, Sor agreed to have her two youngest children register to have child sponsors. This was a door that opened opportunities for her and her husband to begin making significant changes in their family's life. In addition to building a latrine and installing a water filter to boost her family's health, Sor began strengthening her relationships. "As a volunteer, I am more courageous now and am not afraid. I have good relationships with my neighbours because we learn together. After I learn from the FH staff, I am driven to share my new knowledge with my neighbours



Vouch Sor with her granddaughter tending to their free-range chickens.

because I want them to also know about my realizations. I always join in the community activity and want to help in whatever way I can."

Her favourite training so far has been how to make toys for young children using materials easily found in the community, often upcycling pre-used items. "I learned a lot and I came to understand about the development of our children, especially their brain development. ...Not only that, we also know how to respond to newborn babies to help them develop their brain."

Sor is grateful for the changes she and her community are making in partnership with FH. It's transforming the way she views past mistakes and chooses to parent her two younger children. "One of the major

"I learned a lot and I came to understand about the development of our children, especially their brain development. Some of the topics we learned were: learning begins at home, how to avoid toxic stress, and—the most interesting part—when we created the recycled toys for 'make and play'."

— Vouch Sor, **Ta Siem**



The benefits of access to clean water in the home, while a simple need, trickles down to Vouch Sar's grandchildren. Healthy kids mean regular attendance in school leading to a brighter future.



Vouch Sor standing in front of her new clean toilet, complete with hygiene tips.

A BETTER LIFE FOR HER CHILDREN (CONT'D)

changes is how it opened my mind about the value of education [for] my children, and how our support as parents can encourage them to achieve their dreams in the future.”

“I realized with my eldest son how he experienced difficulty, just like us before, because he did not finish his studies. When he got married, he tried so hard to find a job in Siem Reap Town to support his family. It was difficult for him to find a good job even though Siem Reap is a place with a lot of opportunities. He worked in construction and did a lot of labour but later, just got divorced. This made me upset and I regret not encouraging him to continue his studies when he said when he was little that he wanted to stop going to school. If I knew back then what I know now, he could have achieved more and prepared himself to find a better job. ...Now with his two younger siblings, we will try our best to support them. They are both doing well in school now.”

Sor’s additional participation in a Savings and Loans group has enabled her and her husband to expand their farm and raise chickens, thereby improving their food security and income.

With a smile on her face, Sor concludes, “We see a brighter future for our children. ... I am very happy and grateful with FH. I increased my



Fresh veggies for a nutritious meal!

knowledge and despite the limitation of my own education in school, it was not a hindrance for me to learn new things. Every time I see FH staff visit us, I feel very encouraged and I hope that my own children will become like them in the future. They serve as role models to our children in our community.”



Mrs. Vouch Sor and her family in front of her house.

Thank You

FH Canada, FH Cambodia, and the families of Boeng Mealea, Ta Siem, Kantuot, and Tropeang Prasat thank you for your continued partnership on their journey toward self-sustainability. Together, we are building strong communities with capable leadership who are able to weather severe storms like the COVID-19 pandemic.