



# CAMBODIA

## TROPEANG PRASAT, BOENG MEALEA, TA SIEM, AND KANTUOT MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT JULY 2020

PREPARED BY

Food for the Hungry (FH) Cambodia &  
Food for the Hungry (FH) Canada



# INTRODUCTION

Food for the Hungry (FH) Canada continues to walk with families, leaders, and churches in 35 communities in Cambodia. Across the regions of Tropeang Prasat, Boeng Mealea, Ta Siem, and Kantuot, FH promotes activities in education, health, livelihoods, and leadership development through FH’s Child focused Community Transformation (CFCT) model. By integrating various programs across these sectors, the impact of each activity is multiplied. Nearly 40,000 people in 7,762 households in these communities are building a better future for themselves and their neighbours thanks to these activities.

Well on their journey from stuck to thriving, communities in Beong Mealea look forward to celebrating graduation in 2024 and communities in Tropeang Prasat will celebrate graduation in 2026. FH’s walk with communities in Ta Siem and Kantuot are unique, as this partnership is shared with between FH Canada and FH USA. Ta Siem is looking forward to graduating in 2025, and Kantuot in 2026.

The 35 partner communities are found in four regions in the lush central north of Cambodia, north of Cambodia’s Tonlé Sap lake.

BOENG MEALEA	TA SIEM	KANTUOT	TROPEANG PRASAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boeng Mealea</li> <li>• Chann Hear</li> <li>• Tep Chey</li> <li>• Tuek Lich</li> <li>• Trapeang Ruessei</li> <li>• Sakkada</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dambokhpous</li> <li>• Kra Nhoung</li> <li>• Ta Siem</li> <li>• Trapeang Popel</li> <li>• Trapeang Thmor</li> <li>• Trapeang Toem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beth Phkar</li> <li>• Khnar Krao</li> <li>• Kantuot</li> <li>• Ou Meanchey</li> <li>• Thmei</li> <li>• Tropeang Khnar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Char Thmei</li> <li>• Chhuk Sor</li> <li>• Decho Aphivat</li> <li>• Dey Krohorm</li> <li>• O Rom Duol</li> <li>• O Soum</li> <li>• Prasat Krohom Senchey</li> <li>• Preah Prolay</li> <li>• Prey Sa Ark</li> <li>• Srah Chrey</li> <li>• Sre Krasang</li> <li>• Thnol Kaeng</li> <li>• Tomnup Dach</li> <li>• Tuol Char</li> <li>• Tuol Pong Ror</li> <li>• Tuol Prasat</li> <li>• Tuol Tasek</li> </ul>

## COVID-19 UPDATE

FH prioritizes the safety and security of partner communities and staff above all else. When the first cases of COVID-19 were detected in Cambodia in the middle of March, FH Cambodia staff established a Crisis Management Team in the country, and within one week all programming in the communities shifted towards a phone-based approach. FH Cambodia staff reached out via telephone, text messages, and even telegrams to over 366 identified Focal Persons in the communities, teaching them ways to help lessen the negative physical and emotional impact on children, youth, and the most vulnerable within their communities. Community members tell the FH Cambodia staff that this simple contact has eased fears about the pandemic and helped them protect themselves, their families, and their communities.

*For more recent updates regarding FH's response to the pandemic, please visit: [blog.fhcanada.org/2020/03/update-covid-19-in-fh-partner](https://blog.fhcanada.org/2020/03/update-covid-19-in-fh-partner)*





## EDUCATION

Children who receive a quality education are better equipped to become positive agents of change in their communities. FH partners with local schools to encourage and equip teachers to offer a higher quality of education to students. Parent volunteers were taught about engaging and participating in their children's learning, through reading or storytelling, singing songs together, playing games, homework support, and more. The purpose is to establish consistent engagement of caregivers in children's education. Caregiver volunteers have been very active and showed their creativity in preparing the materials (using some initial materials provided by FH and other available materials around them, including recyclable materials) and practicing these with their children. Volunteers were visited at home by FH staff to mentor, encourage, and build their confidence.

Community learning spaces are also important for children's growth and development. This includes after-school clubs and community libraries. FH staff trained Youth Leaders to become teaching assistants, allowing them to hone their leadership skills and other talents. During this period, a new group of teacher volunteers were identified for training to supervise children's clubs.

Children learned valuable lessons through school gardening clubs. In addition to teaching kids about growing their own food, the school gardens provided a source of food for feeding children in school. Students learned how to prepare and maintain a garden. They learned responsibility and how to care for others by sharing the freshly grown produce.



*This school gardening club in Decho Aphivat is a fruitful learning experience for kids of all ages.*



# EDUCATION

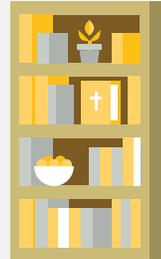
## ACTIVITIES

174 after-school club volunteers trained and supported



# 410

caregivers trained in supporting children's education



# 2

community libraries established

### COVID-19 UPDATE

As the threat of the virus caused schools to shut down, community members experienced anxiety and helplessness about their future. The Cambodian government is providing remote learning in the form of online classes so that children can continue with their education. Parents are creating study spaces in their homes for their children and are establishing routines for them to study, play, eat, and relax. Parents have even involved their children in planting and harvesting garden crops for the home.

The FH Cambodia staff are encouraged by the leadership of Youth Focal Leaders in assisting children in their neighbourhoods on distance-learning via television and telephone.



*Kids enjoy writing to their sponsors at writing club in the community of Decho Aphivat.*



## HEALTH

Cascade groups spread health and nutrition messages throughout the communities. Volunteer leaders received training from FH staff or local specialists and then pass the new knowledge on to their neighbours. This year, Cascade group (known in the Cambodia partner communities as “Hope groups”) volunteers received training on Infant Child and Youth Feeding, including breastfeeding, essential nutrition, and complementary feeding. Mothers learned the importance of breastfeeding to boost the immune system of infants along with other important health information.

Volunteer mothers learned how to prepare a specially balanced yet tasty porridge for children 6-23 months old. This also benefited kids attending the children’s clubs by providing them with a nutritious meal. Children who normally didn’t like eating vegetables enjoyed eating the veggies cooked into the tasty porridge.

Kids attending the children’s clubs also learned about good sanitation and hygiene practices, including hand washing and the importance of trash disposal. Good environmental care and personal hygiene are important in these communities, and FH is consistent in promoting and encouraging it within the community, with local leaders, volunteers, and especially with children and youth. The goal is to set life-long healthy habits.



*Children washing their hands and staying clean in the community of Tuek Lich.*

## ACTIVITIES

124 home visits to follow up with volunteer mothers

2,293 children and youth trained in good sanitation and hygiene (WASH)



# 376

Cascade (Hope) group  
volunteers trained in  
nutrition and other  
health topics



# 573

children receiving  
nutritious porridge

### COVID-19 UPDATE

Using the phone-based approach to training, FH Cambodia shared essential COVID-19 hygiene lessons. Using local materials, community members then created posters and even videos to share within their neighbourhoods. This helped people to understand how the virus is transmitted, motivating them to do their part in prevent the spread. FH Cambodia staff were encouraged by the resourcefulness of community members in creating their own WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities and handwashing stations using recycled containers.





## LIVELIHOODS

FH helps communities kickstart income-generating opportunities wherever possible. Livestock programs, Savings and Loans groups, and business startups are a few examples of livelihoods programs. This year, FH staff trained families to raise small livestock such as chickens, ducks, pigs, and fish. These livestock are a profitable source of income for the family because of high demand of certain products for special occasions like weddings, local events and celebrations, and also for daily meals.

Savings and Loans groups provided communities with access to available capital. Despite the economic challenges brought by COVID-19, people continued to save what they could. Community Credit groups are another way for communities to help more people gain access to larger capital. These groups are made up of a wider number of members and provide low interest loan opportunities for members. Community leaders and savings group leaders discussed the formation of a Credit group in the communities, allowing them to weigh the advantages and disadvantages it could bring in their community.



*Long beans are a prolific and common crop in the region, leading to plenty of excess to sell at markets.*



# LIVELIHOODS

## ACTIVITIES

410 kids trained in gardening through school clubs  
505 members of Savings and Loans groups supported

1 new Community Credit group established  
259 community members trained in agriculture



**38** groups made up of **451** people learning agriculture



**130** women and youth engaged in income generating activities

### COVID-19 UPDATE

The negative impact of the pandemic is strongly felt by community members, and there has been a significant decrease in income levels since the government first mandated lockdown measures. Using remote training, FH Cambodia continues to promote home gardening and animal raising as a practical and sustainable way to help ensure food and nutrition for families. FH Cambodia staff have seen that not only does this training provide the household with food, but it also becomes a time of family bonding as they garden and care for animals together. **Despite decreased incomes, families are growing enough to eat and they are not experiencing a food crisis like other parts of the country.**



*A savings group in O Soum meets around its deposit box to review their finances.*

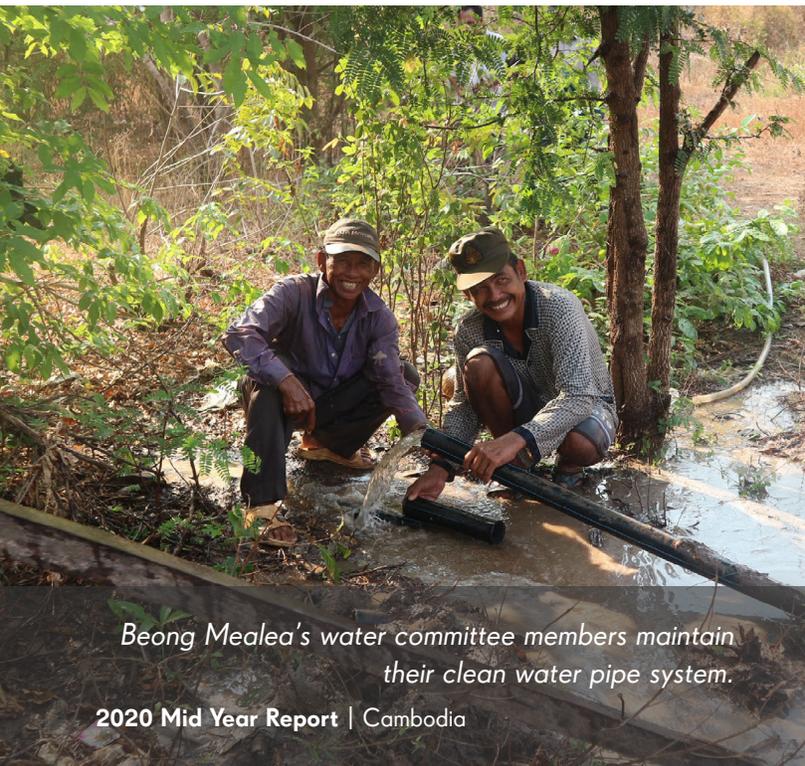


## LEADERSHIP

FH builds the capacity of local leaders so that they might lead with compassion and a servant heart. FH helps lead the planning, mobilizing, and implementing of community transformation plans. Community Development Committees (CDC) are established in each of the communities where FH is working. The CDC members work together to plan and implement needed projects in their communities. Some examples of work done by CDCs this year include:

- The community pond in Chan Hear was completely fenced to keep the children safe. This is one of the community's clean water sources, and is especially critical during the dry season. The leaders in this village initiated this project and mobilized community members to complete it in two days.
- The Water Committee in Boeng Mealea surveyed the water pipe system from the top of Kulen Mountain and organized the community to conduct repairs.
- In Ta Siem, the CDC worked with the community to build a fence around the primary school to protect children during school hours.

Community events helped promote awareness of potential disasters and how to prepare and respond to them. Some communities planted trees while others provided information to their residents about protection against forest fires. Community members and leaders participated in a region-wide training on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), empowering the CDCs to develop disaster management plans for their respective communities.



*Beong Mealea's water committee members maintain their clean water pipe system.*



*The Community Development Committee for Chhuk Sor meets quarterly to discuss projects and goals.*



# LEADERSHIP

## ACTIVITIES

194 Leaders trained in Disaster Risk Reduction

Environment Day events held in all communities with **3,842** participants



**343** Active Community Development Committee leaders

### COVID-19 UPDATE

The Focal Persons contacted by FH Cambodia during the first weeks of the pandemic response were identified as those with the skills, relationships, and connections to help guide communities through this time. These individuals included community leaders, Savings and Loans group leaders, and even Youth Volunteers. They have been instrumental in passing along critical information from FH Cambodia staff to their community members. Leaders from all areas are demonstrating their desire to take responsibility for their community.



*Cascade health groups and community leaders build a new clean toilet for a family in the community of Chan Hear.*

## SAVING HER FAMILY, SERVING HER COMMUNITY

She smiled and said, “All of FH’s projects help people in the community. They make a big difference personally, like building my self-confidence that I can do something despite my limited education. I can improve our living condition, both in our own family and for the whole community. I am happy and feeling motivated to do more.”

Roern En belongs to one of the two Savings and Loans groups in Tep Chey, a remote village in Boeng Mealea. Joining the group triggered a ripple effect of incredible changes for herself, her family, and her community.

En and her husband Lon Yet used to struggle to provide for their three children. Lon Yet worked as a day labourer, but despite his hardest efforts they never knew if there would be enough. “I remember that there were many times we lacked food and I pitied my children. I asked my eldest son to drop out

of school and help his father. We did not have any idea about small business back then,” recalls En.

At first, En was nervous about saving money as a group and she thought the meetings would be a waste of time. But through the persistent encouragement of FH staff, she began to participate. And she loved it! “Being in a savings group opened more ideas to me on what I can do with my savings,” she explains. “FH presented to us several options that we can try and engage to make our money grow.”

En began discussing ideas with her husband to create work that was more productive and satisfying than labouring for others. Together, they made a plan. En borrowed 3,000,000 Riels (nearly \$1,000 CAD) from her group to launch her Khmer Noodles\* business and to buy a water tank and hand tractor for Lon Yet’s new water

*\*Khmer Noodles: Num banh chok are traditional, labour-intensive noodles made by hand using a heavy stone mill to crush fermented rice. Dishes created from these iconic noodles also carry their name.*



Roern En selling noodles to her neighbour.

## SAVING HER FAMILY, SERVING HER COMMUNITY (CONT'D)

delivery business. Both of these activities had a dual purpose—to provide much-needed income for their family and serve their community.

“Khmer noodles is profitable because it needs small capital and people love to eat this for breakfast. It will never be out of demand because it is part of Cambodian staple food already. Not only that, I feel that by selling it, I help my community in their daily activities, especially in the morning when they don’t have enough time to prepare food for their family,” En excitedly explains the personal and communal benefits of their businesses. “Our hand tractor is not only used for water delivery but also to transport our family to market and to the farm. [In addition], we can deliver water especially when there’s no rain since water is one of the basic necessities of the people.”

Today, En and her husband are providing for their family. They eat well and their two youngest are back in school full-time. Their eldest son has not yet chosen to finish his education, but En holds out hope that he will still go into vocational training.

Through additional FH workshops, En also learned about agriculture, general family health, and the value of education. “Before, we lived a very unhealthy life because we were not given any options. Even something as simple as drinking safe water—we did not know that the water my children were drinking was making them sick with diarrhea. They also often got the flu and dengue fever during rainy season. We felt hopeless at that time and that situation was really awful. I don’t like my children and my family to experience the same hopelessness again,” she shares. In response to what she learned, Roern En’s family started using a latrine, filtering their water, and washing their hands more frequently.

Though remote, Tep Chey Village no longer lacks access to what people need for daily living. Due to their creativity and openness to new possibilities, they’ve diversified their livelihoods to serve their families and each other. “We’ve changed in the way we look at life,” En testifies. “In the future, I hope to see that each family will not struggle anymore, and we can sustain the changes we started now.”



*Roern’s children enjoying caring for the family flock of ducks and studying together at home.*

# THE HEART OF A CAREGIVER

Det Net is a young mother who has bravely taken on the role of a volunteer caregiver. In this capacity, she teaches other parents in her village of O Romdul (Tropeang Prasat) how to creatively engage their toddlers with early childhood development techniques at home and encourages them to take their preschoolers to school. With a four-year-old daughter and two-month-old son at home, she has plenty of opportunity to practice what she teaches! Her husband supports the family on his policeman's salary, which they supplement with raising chickens and growing a home garden.



*Det Net takes notes on a poster at her Cascade group meeting.*

“Before FH came, I was not active in community activities. I was a full-time mother and wife. I had my first baby and was focused on her and my husband. I didn't think I could do something for others; being a volunteer was not on my mind. I was also shy because I dropped out of school in Grade 8. I did not push my parents to let me continue to study at a higher level. In their time, education was not important, especially during the [Khmer Rouge] war because it could endanger their lives.

“I was invited to attend a meeting in the community and for the first time I was happy that I went. FH staff grouped us and facilitated the selection of volunteers for different sectors: Agriculture, Health, and Caregiver. I was surprised that my group selected me to be a volunteer Caregiver. FH then trained us on our roles and responsibilities as volunteers, and on topics about why education is important, how to help in the cognitive development of our younger children, and how to be resourceful in creating the materials for these activities at home. This was very timely because I have two babies, a four-year-old and a two-month-old! It really changed my mindset about the value of education and how it will help us later in life.



## THE HEART OF A CAREGIVER (CONT'D)

“It’s really interesting for me to apply what I learn to my own children. It helps me become familiar with the topic and how to share it with my neighbours in an interesting way. Since we have a preschool in our community, I bring my daughter there and let her mingle with other children and learn in a fun way. We also do fun things at home that increase our bonding, our mother-daughter relationship.

“Before, I seldom participated in community activities because I was fearful others might ask me a question I don’t know the answer to, and I would be embarrassed. But it’s very different now that I learned a lot of new ideas and knowledge. I’m excited to share with my neighbours; it’s become a sort of bonding for us, that we learn from each other. We are happy to do reading and play days in our group for our children.

“We are excited for the future of our children. I like what I see in our community, people helping one another. Our community is starting to look different—in our children’s education, in our health practices, in agriculture, and many more. I enjoy seeing us altogether creating these positive changes. It strengthens our relationship and I believe that whatever issues and problems may arise in the future, we will overcome them.”



## Thank You

At this critical point in their journey toward graduation, Food for the Hungry (FH) Canada, FH Cambodia, and the leaders and families in Tropeang Prasat, Boeng Mealea, Ta Siem, and Kantuot thank you for your generous support. Now more than ever, your participation in this journey out of poverty is deeply appreciated. You are transforming lives today and creating a stronger tomorrow. Thank you!