



## ANNUAL REPORT 2024



**Serving rural poor families & communities in northwest Cambodia since 2008**

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**Helping Foundation**

*Report by Dr Eng Samnang  
Director, Cambodia Family Support  
January 2025*

## BACKGROUND

Cambodia Family Support (CFS) is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) registered with the Ministry of Interior in Cambodia since 2008. CFS is supported by Rotary in Australia (a Rotary Australia World Community Service project with Rotary Club of Perth as sponsoring club).

CFS evolved following a four-year posting of Vincent and Helen Keane in Cambodia. At that time Vincent was Chief of Mission with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Helen was working with a humanitarian NGO. IOM was managing and supervising a program in the Northwest of Cambodia that was under the directorship of Cambodian physician Dr Eng Samnang. Following the end of the funding cycle of Dr Samnang's program, arrangements were made for CFS to be formed and the Keanes were charged with securing funding. CFS operations are now entering their eighteenth year.

CFS operates in the northwest of Cambodia, some 300kms from the national capital of Phnom Penh. The 4 districts covered by CFS are in Battambang and Pailin Provinces. They are populated by poor landless families who live in remote villages that are provided with minimal services and opportunity. The area is close to the Thai border. This is a pull factor for poor Cambodians from other parts of the country seeking employment in Thailand.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CFS Activities:

- Supporting vulnerable groups, including high-risk families and individuals with physical disabilities
- Enhancing childhood education & partnering with schools to improve children's well-being
- Providing income generation assistance, including the Animal Bank initiative
- Improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) access
- Offering basic housing support and emergency response/crises interventions
- Promoting community collaboration through village self-help groups
- Strengthening networks of local authorities to address the needs of rural communities, with focus on women and children
- Reducing domestic violence, combating human trafficking/promoting safe migration

## Results Summary

	Totals for all 4 districts - Rattanak Mondul & Kamrieng in Battambang Province and Sala Krau & Pailin Districts in Pailin Province	
1	Youth trained to conduct peer awareness-raising	24
2	Student participants in awareness-raising (WASH*)	3891
3	Villager participants in awareness-raising (WASH*)	3818
4	Families provided a latrine, water storage jar and/or water filter	94
7	Communities provided a communal water source	4
8	Community Education Centers constructed	1
9	New village self-help groups established	5
10	Families given Income generation assistance	46
11	Families given Emergency assistance	34
12	Animal Bank – calves passed to another family	72
13	Animal Bank – piglets passed to another family	42
14	Animal Bank – kid goats passed to another family	8
15	Families provided a simple house/house repairs	7
17	Teachers trained to participate in school networks*	16
18	School drop-outs re-enrolled in school	32
19	Children given school uniforms	49

20	Seriously under-nourished children treated	<b>51</b>
21	Vulnerable persons referred to health centers	<b>273</b>
23	Vulnerable women & children cared for at PFC*	<b>288</b>
24	Youth referred for vocational training from PFC	<b>7</b>

\* School networks to protect vulnerable children

\* WASH: Water Sanitation & Hygiene

\* PFC: Pailin Family Center (run by CFS)

#### Budget Summary

Source of funds (all figures in USD)	Opening Bal	Received	Expenses	Closing Bal
Terre des hommes Germany (Tdh-G)	4,349	22,165	25,784	730
Private donors & Helping Foundation, Australia – via Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS)	40,622	30,938	60,083	11,477
Rotary Clubs in Perth (for WASH) via RAWCS	-	2,240	2,240	-
Private donors, Cambodia	-	3,550	3,550	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,971</b>	<b>58,893</b>	<b>91,657</b>	<b>12,207</b>

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Cambodia Family Support (CFS) assists rural poor families in meeting basic needs, improving livelihoods to achieve long-term self-sufficiency. CFS uses four core components:

- A. Community based activities
- B. School based activities
- C. Center based activities
- D. Strengthening local networks

### A. COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITIES

Community activities focus on supporting low-income families. CFS works directly with these families in their homes and communities. Their poverty extends beyond financial difficulties—it also includes a lack of knowledge and skills needed to overcome challenges.

CFS staff travel from village to village, responding to the needs of the rural population. Five key interconnected activities ensure effective, comprehensive support for rural communities:

1. Family Visits
2. Emergency Assistance
3. Establishment of village Self-Help Groups (SHGs)
4. Income Generation Assistance
5. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) activities

#### 1. Family visits

Family visits serve as the initial step for further project interventions. This activity is crucial in providing assistance and addressing family challenges effectively.

During these visits, CFS staff gather essential family information and gain a deeper understanding of their real-life situation. Family evaluations provide an opportunity to talk, discuss, and collaboratively identify the best ways to address their problems with their agreement and participation. Together with the family and their neighbours, we openly discuss the challenges they face and explore potential solutions.





## 2. Emergency Assistance

CFS provides emergency assistance to families facing severe issues such as acute illness, food shortages and inadequate shelter. In some cases, emergency assistance serves as an initial step toward additional support, such as capital assistance or livelihood improvements. If vulnerable children and women require specialized support beyond CFS's scope, referrals are made to appropriate services. These may include:

- Access to safe shelters provided by NGOs
- Vocational training programs
- Other tailored resources

During 2024 CFS provided emergency assistance to many families who were identified by communities as experiencing food insecurity, unsafe living conditions, or other urgent needs.





### 3. Establishment of Village Self-Help Groups: collaboration for stronger communities



Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are formed by local villagers who come together to support one another. The primary goal of SHGs is to foster community cooperation and mutual aid among rural families. Steps to Establish an SHG

1. Raising Awareness: Sharing the objectives and importance of SHGs with the community.
2. Community Meetings: Discuss ways to support each other, saving practices, and resource-sharing.
3. Group Formation: Voluntary participation of 15 to 45 families to form a group.
4. Policy Development: Establishing internal policies for group operations.
5. Leadership Selection: Electing a group leader and treasurer through a democratic vote.
6. Training Leaders: Providing guidance and mentoring.

CFS actively facilitates and coordinates throughout the process to ensure smooth implementation. Group policies emphasize inclusivity, prioritizing the participation of poor families.

### 4. Income Generation Activities

Income generation is a core component of CFS's implementation strategy. Our efforts primarily focus on supporting poor parents within Self-Help Groups (SHGs). CFS offers a small amount of capital and material assistance tailored to each family's skills, commitment, and local resources. The aim is to promote sustainable income generation through activities that include:

- Agriculture: Growing vegetables, corn, cassava, rice, sesame, etc.
- Animal Husbandry: Raising goats, piglets, cows, ducks, chickens, and fish.
- Microbusinesses: Operating small grocery stores, food shops, or vehicle repair services.
- Other Ventures: Engaging in sewing, weaving, and mushroom cultivation.

During 2024 CFS supported 46 poor families with capital assistance to help them become self-supporting.

#### Market Gardens







## Other micro-enterprises





Many families are interested in animal husbandry, both as a family food source and for income-generation. CFS supports raising chickens, ducks, fish, frogs, goats, piglets, and cows.

## Poultry



## Fish





## Frogs



## Goats

CFS started this project in 2018. Goats are relatively easy to raise because they are hardy animals who can forage for food.



## Pigs

Pig farming is common in some areas of Cambodia. But pigs require a significant amount of water and consume food that is also needed for humans. This presents challenges for CFS families. We operate in areas where water is scarce, and the families we support already struggle to provide enough food for their children. The number of CFS families raising pigs has continued to decline this year with only 17 families continuing to raise pigs.





## Cattle

Cattle rearing is increasingly popular as a sustainable way to improve household income. Both heifers and bulls are valuable assets that can provide a reliable source of income. Since 2012 CFS has provided 221 calves to families through the Animal Bank project. A few of these animals were donations from 2 other Australian-based non-profit groups, “Cows for Cambodia” and Helping Foundation (Mike and Corinne Gurry). To date, 450 calves have been transferred to other families as part of the pass-on system. This process ensures that families receive a calf from CFS, raise it, and later pass on two calves to another family within the village or their Self-Help Group (SHG). At the end of 2024 some 260 heifers/calves are still ‘in the system’.





## 5. Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

We know that poor sanitation and hygiene in Cambodian rural communities contribute to frequent illnesses, particularly among children under five. These recurring health issues strain families' resources, reinforcing cycles of poverty. Our community education focuses on promoting clean living environments and raising awareness of the need for good sanitation and hygiene practice. We also provide material help.

Our WASH activities:

- Community education and action
- Install latrines (CFS provides underground part, villagers help each other to make the 'outhouse')
- Provide 1800L rainwater collection jars
- Provide filters for potable water
- Provide communal water sources (bores/pumps, ponds)



### Community education & action (village clean up: during and after)







## Latrines



Before building



They helped each other



Latrine complete built



Before building



Helping each other to build



Complete build



## Rainwater collection jars:



Before providing



After providing



Before providing



After providing



Before providing



After providing



## Filters for potable water



## Providing communal water sources

### i. Creating a village pond







**ii. New village bore & pump**







**iii. Repairing an abandoned bore and pump (and teaching villagers how to maintain this)**





## B. SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES

CFS recognizes the importance of providing children with a positive school learning environment. CFS works with teachers, promotes play activities and trains select children to be peer-educators. Peers-training gives selected school children a more in-depth knowledge of relevant topics (eg. WASH, Safe migration, environment). The trained peer-educators then participate with CFS staff to lead awareness-raising events at school and in the community.



Play activities have been integrated into every CFS target school to create an environment that encourages attendance. These activities bring children together for fun and social interaction, fostering a positive school experience. CFS collaborates with trained teachers and peer educators to conduct play sessions.





## Community Education Centers (Literacy Centers)

Some rural children lack opportunity to attend a government school. Reasons include distance, road conditions especially during the rainy season. With the aid of generous donors from Perth, Australia CFS has built 10 Education Centers over the past 12 years. Teachers are provided by the local education department. The community is responsible for maintaining the property. Below pictures of the process of school construction with community participation:



Dr. Samnang, director of CFS, conducts location pre-assessment



Community and local authorities hand over location for school building







Visits to see building progress



Ceremony to handover to the community





The student body (cultural preference is for the children to sit on the floor)

### **C. CENTER-BASED ACTIVITY (Pailin Family Center)**

The Pailin Family Center was established in January 2017 to serve the most vulnerable members of the community, primarily women and children. In 2024 we provided services to 288 persons including:

- Victims of domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. The center collaborates with local police and the Ministries of Women's and Social Affairs to deal with problems.
- Individuals struggling with mental health issues.
- Rural poor in need of temporary accommodation while accessing emergency medical care or other urgent assistance in Pailin.
- School and community-based awareness programs to educate vulnerable rural populations about the risks of human trafficking (TIP).

We provide consultation, psychological counseling, conduct home visits for verification of information, collaborate with local authorities. Women and children who need extra assistance are referred to other NGOs or government agencies.



PFC & CFS staff provide temporary shelter/respite for a family in need.





CFS referred this young woman for skills training with a local beauty salon

#### **D. STRENGTHENING LOCAL NETWORKS**

CFS is committed to strengthening local assistance networks. These networks, formed with community and village leaders, as well as departments like Social Affairs, Women's Affairs and the Police, focus on technical assistance, problem-solving, and protection of at-risk populations, especially women and children. Their goal is to prevent harm and effectively address family issues in a timely manner.

CFS actively supports and regularly participates in Women and Children Consultative Committee (WCCC) meetings. Issues raised in these meetings are translated into action plans with specific timeframes for family visits and interventions. When problems arise, CFS collaborates with WCCC members to conduct home visits, assess the situation, and provide solutions, ensuring timely support for women and children.



CFS staff member addressing a WCCC meeting



### **An Example of CFS impact on a single family**

Long Sokha is 62 years old penniless widow living with her three grandchildren ages five, nine and thirteen years in a remote village in Pailin Province. Her husband died some years ago. Her home was inadequate to accommodate the four of them and leaked during the seasonal rains. Dr Samnang met with her and listened to her story, one filled with despair and lack of hope.



The immediate need was food for the family, so we provided a bag of rice and a few staples. After discussions it was agreed that two priorities should be addressed: First, the need for Sokha to generate a modest income, and second, the importance for the children to attend school.

Following discussions with Sokha and the villagers as to how best to address these priorities and it was agreed that Sokha would be provided with a modest amount of seed money (around \$50 equivalent) to establish a small food shop on the main road (such stalls are common in villages, remote from conventional shopping access). Subsequent visits by Dr Samnang confirmed that Sokha's stall was well established and providing a welcome service to the villagers.

The children were enrolled in the local school and provided with uniforms.

The next issue to address was the poor living conditions, a tiny shack that leaked profusely in the rainy season, with difficult access to water and no latrine. CFS had sufficient funds to provide Sokha and her grandchildren a modest house with a 1800 litre concrete water jug to store rain water, and a latrine. The community pitched in to help provide these.

Dr Samnang with Sokha and her youngest grandchild in front of her new house. The 2 older grandchildren were at school when this photo was taken.



## CHALLENGES

CFS has achieved significant progress in addressing the plight of the rural poor in the areas where we work. However, significant challenges remain in addressing poverty: homelessness, access to education for children and the realities of unsafe migration.

1. Landlessness among rural poor greatly limits their ability to grow food and raise animals.
2. The lack of education and literacy abilities of much of the adult population limits their capacity for improvement.
3. The areas served by CFS borders on Thailand, a relatively prosperous nation compared with Cambodia. There are powerful incentives to cross the border illegally to seek employment. Significant risks exist for those who cross the border.
  - It is common for employers to deceive 'migrants' and not meet the pay and conditions promised. In some situations, workers receive no pay at all.
  - Young women and girls are trafficked for sex. In such situations they are often locked in brothels for prolonged periods. The victims have no access to police or other Thai authorities as they are illegally in Thailand.
  - An important downside of illegal cross-border migration is that it disrupts the family. Children are left with a single parent or, in some situations, both parents cross the border and leave the children in the care of an elder sibling or grandparent.
4. The rural poor depend greatly on their capacity to grow their own food and feed their animals. This, of course requires significant quantities of water. Sometimes the rains fail and they are unable to grow their rice, kang kong and other vegetables. Those who raise animals must have ready access to water. CFS has a program to provide wells and pumps and small dams to provide larger quantities of water suitable for irrigation and animal husbandry.
5. Travel is difficult for the rural poor. There is virtually no public transportation. Some roads/tracks are hardly navigable and in the wet season cannot be used. Villagers who need to travel for employment or for their micro business are thus greatly handicapped. These challenges also apply to children attending school.

## HOW WE PLAN TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

1. Continue to improve CFS staff capacity to respond to the effect of changing weather patterns on rural poor communities.
2. Continue WASH activities to ensure access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene for all. This is particularly important in Pailin where the need is greatest.
3. Continue to provide awareness raising on safe migration and the consequences of human trafficking. CFS has a very high-profile program which educates the rural poor on the risks of crossing the border.
4. Maintain good collaboration with all stakeholders who are mandated to help the rural poor. Our program will continue to work with them as much as we can and in line with CFS goals and objectives.
5. Continue student/youth training and youth-led awareness raising in schools and communities (focus on the environment, sanitation, hygiene, food safety, safe migration).



6. Continue to mentor and build the capacity of community network members. Focus will be on identifying and prioritizing problems, improving facilitation skills, coordination skills, problems solving skills.
7. Provide housing for the most vulnerable families.

Respectfully submitted by Dr. ENG Samnang  
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January 2025

CFS website in Khmer & English: [www.cambodiafs.org](http://www.cambodiafs.org)  
(to see the original report and photos)

**Editors' Note:** Dr Samnang's native language is not English. His original report has been edited in an attempt to make it shorter (?!) and easier to read. As always, his photos tell an amazing story (we tried to keep as many as possible).

[Donate Here](#) If you would like to support CFS. (Donations made through Rotary Australia World Community Service are tax-deductible in Australia.)