

Visit to Cambodia Family Support CFS (Battambang & Pailin Provinces) 03-07 March 2025, Vincent and Helen Keane (Rotary Club of Perth)

We are grateful for Rotary's sponsorship of CFS. If you would like to make an impact among rural poor Cambodians, please consider making a tax-deductible donation [Rotary Australia World Community Service project link](#)



We arrived in Siem Reap Monday 3rd March and drove to Pailin. The new Siem Reap airport (built & owned by a Chinese company) is an hour's drive from Siem Reap. Siem Reap to Pailin drive is about 4 hours over good roads.

We stopped in Kamrieng, Battambang Province to visit a village new to CFS. The newly established village self-help group (SHG) was meeting, mentored by 2 CFS staffers (*photo below*). Half the members are better off with some assets. CFS staff record the poor ones who request assistance, with notes on what they feel they have the abilities and small resources to do (with a bit of input from CFS and the SHG) e.g. raise chickens, grow mushrooms, road-side stall.



CFS creates impact & real change

In Rattanak Mondul District we visited a village where CFS has been working since early 2024 with a now well-functioning village SHG. A Community Education Center was completed mid-2024. This is on the grounds of a government school (for older students). The building is well cared for and is well-attended. It is clear to see the difference CFS has made to the village. Dr Samnang told us the government school is now better attended, and the lives of villagers has improved overall with the poorest having received help from CFS. There is a sense of community.



Small shop for a family



Chickens



Cows



A couple communal water sources (bores with simple hand pump). These cost about USD1300 to install. Bore drillers only get paid if they hit water.

We met an old couple. Their daughters had left the area to find work leaving them to look after 2 young children with no means of support. They have a few CFS supplied goats, a few gallons of water stored in a CFS-supplied jar and a dilapidated house. Dr Samnang is trying to find a more sustainable way of assisting this family, difficult without easy access to water (*photo at right*).



This young woman received help from CFS several years ago. At that time her husband had left her destitute, desperate and vulnerable. CFS gave her ~\$50 startup capital for a tailoring business. Today she owns a successful business and provides mentoring and support to other needy families.



We also visited the site for the next Education Center (recently funded). This village, in westernmost Rattanak Mondul, is newer to CFS. The village is on a dirt road which is also accessible from Pailin (although in the rainy season that access may be more difficult). The village has a good start-up SHG.

The third day was spent in Pailin, Salakrao District. We visited a family that demonstrated the impact CFS has had in this area. This family was helped by CFS about 5 years ago. They now have a good house and extensive gardens with vegetables, fruit trees and a large fishpond. The 2 daughters now attend university in Battambang. They are now mentors to other families to improve their livelihood.



This old man is a bundle of energy. He greeted us with great enthusiasm and gratitude for the help his family has received from CFS. He showed us his fishpond, small rice paddy and several cows.

For the remainder of the day, we visited multiple individual houses and communities and noted that those families with commitment and access to water tended to have achieved much more. Without access to water for gardening and animal raising it is difficult to succeed.



We stopped by one family that supports itself by raising locust – kept inside these simple structures. The insects are exported to Thailand, where fried grasshoppers are a popular snack. A truck comes periodically to the area to collect the critters.



This man and his family sleep in a cage for goat-raising. (An unsuccessful outcome of goats and goat cage, donated by another NGO that no longer works in the area.) The family has a small vegetable garden a couple kilometres away next to a stream, grow long beans to sell in the market. They have no easy water source. CFS is working on a more sustainable way to help this family.

Instant noodles are everywhere! This boy was eating his lunch while his father talked with Dr Samnang about possible ways CFS can help this family. They have a very small plot of land but no reliable water source.



The whole area where CFS works has many internally displaced persons who migrate from other parts of Cambodia, drawn by the availability of unoccupied land and proximity to Thailand. It is now the end of the hot dry season. The area is very dry, especially Pailin. Dr Samnang and his team continue to work in most challenging environment with a commitment that is confirmed in the outstanding results for many poor in this harsh and challenging environment.

Please consider helping. Donate [here](#) (tax-deductible through Rotary)

**Families needing a basic house
(cost for each with large water jar & latrine, USD1500-2000)**

Family 1

CFS focuses on helping the disabled. This man is a land-mine victim, lives in this shack with his wife and child in Rattanak Mondul (pictured with CFS staffer, on right).



Family 2

Disabled man and his family in Rattanak Mondul (pictured with Dr Samnang)



Family 3 - lives in Salakrau District, Pailin (pictured with a CFS staffer, writing)

