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*Empowering families and children to effect lasting change... community by community.*



## Yummy Breakfast for Preschool Kids!

In rural Cambodia, villagers often cannot grow enough food to feed the family, especially during the dry season. And year-round it is a challenge to grow enough different types of crops to have balanced nutrition. Not having the right things to eat directly affects the children, especially the youngest of the children, leading to malnutrition and developmental challenges.

Sustainable Cambodia (SC) works directly with the community families to promote nutrition and good healthcare. Our Cambodian staff works with the families to teach them new agricultural skills and techniques. We provide small micro loans for crops, and farm animals through the animal pass-on program. And we help the families get water to the village, not only healthy drinking water but also water for irrigation. The families learn how to grow food, year-round, and can become self-sufficient.

But the process doesn't happen overnight. It requires multiple growing seasons to learn how to produce alternate crops in various growing conditions. During the several years it can take for a village to become self-sufficient, it isn't an option to simply ignore the sweet children who are growing up in a challenged environment.

So Sustainable Cambodia also provides a Child Nutrition Program. Through training courses given to the community leaders and groups of mothers, the families rotate to cook a nutritious breakfast for their children. This program has been implemented in seven of SC's community preschools so far, largely supported by Rotary of Western Australia. The program helps 250 children, from ages 1 to 6, who receive this nutritious meal six days a week. In collaboration with the project, the parents contribute rice, sugar, and their labor in cooking this food. Rotary of Western Australia and other sponsors contribute funding for the balance of the ingredients.



This project has been implemented by the community families themselves, with supervision and guidance from our staff. The group of mothers rotates from day to day so that they all learn skills in how to build nutrition into their meals at home. They learn about the various types of food, and about the role of protein, complex carbohydrates and vitamins in health. The ingredients they use are varied, including cabbages, squash, carrots, eggs, fish and green vegetables. Some ingredients are grown in the local community and the rest are purchased in the town market.

The children are always happy when the morning breakfast is served, bright and early at 7 o'clock! After the healthy breakfast, the children are able to focus on school. They play better, learn more, and have enhanced well-being as pupils and in their families. The families and children all have new knowledge and awareness about food and health. And the children are learning from an early age, so they are more likely to stay in school and do well as they grow.

SC hopes to spread this program to other community preschools in Preak Py and Opreal village and beyond. There are many children waiting to be helped. The community families love this program, and the children are fantastic.

You enable this and similar programs by either contributing as a Sustaining Sponsor, or a Child Sponsor, or giving to the Community Development or Education programs.




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Sustainable Cambodia is an internationally supported grass-roots not-for-profit organization, led by dedicated Cambodian staff with help from international volunteers, and with support from child sponsors and Rotary Clubs from all over the world. SC works with rural Cambodian villages to help them achieve sustainability and self-sufficiency. Sustainable Cambodia was co-founded by Rotarians, and active Rotarians make up a majority of Sustainable Cambodia's governing Board of Directors. SC aligns its values with those of Rotary International, including RI's ideals of empowerment, peace through understanding, world service and community service. We apply Rotary's effective "Four-Way Test" to ethical issues. Our model is unique in several ways:

- Only native Cambodians are employed as paid staff, and all international officers, directors and consultants are unpaid volunteers, ensuring that 100% of funding goes directly into the rural village programs.
- We are an empowerment organization rather than an "Aid" organization. We provide resources, assistance, training and education to the community, empowering families to revitalize their community and economy.
- Our approach is broad-based, including schooling for children, safe village drinking water, irrigation systems, alternative agriculture, vocational education, micro-business and healthcare.  
 In return for the assistance, each family commits to helping surrounding villages: We not only "teach them how to fish," but teach them to teach others how to fish.

While we currently work in central Cambodia, our vision is for this empowerment model to spread across Cambodia, and ultimately to grow into other countries.

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