Summer 2016 Newsletter

News on Trailblazer Foundation's activities during the past quarter.

Broadening Trailblazer's Base of Support

Note from the Executive Director

Hello All,

The idea of broadening one’s base is something we in the United States are hearing about these days, given that it is a presidential election year. This year, 2016, is also a year in which we at Trailblazer Foundation have re-doubled our efforts to broaden our base, both our donor base, and our program and operations support base.

At the core of these efforts is our renewed commitment to, and increased investment in, reaching out to new contacts, connections, and collaborators. This started when Tom Skeele, our Communications and Development Director, and I traveled to Cambodia in January, and met with local tourism businesses that wanted to partner with us.

Our efforts continued when we returned to the states, with visits to existing and potential donors and business partners in different regions of the country. Complementing these and other activities, we have also significantly increased our public profile through social media.

These efforts are already paying off financially. Trailblazer has experienced a 27 percent increase in donors since the start of the year - 65 new donors, out of a total of 235 active donors. We are also receiving increased human capital support, with more volunteers offering their time and energy in both Siem Reap and the states. Here are a few examples of these successes.

- During a visit to the east coast in April, Tom Skeele met with Friendly Planet Travel in Pennsylvania, and established two new collaborations with them: [1] the international travel company is helping leverage some of our fundraising efforts (see crowdfunding example below), and [2] is interested in bringing its guests in Siem Reap to visit the local Women's Development Center, with whom we are increasing our collaboration through our Economic Development program.

- With the support of Friendly Planet Travel, we have launched our first-ever crowdfunding campaign, to raise money for a new well-drilling truck. This campaign, which we will conclude at the end of July, has brought in many of our new donors.
Peggy Goldman, President of Friendly Planet Travel, explains why she supports Trailblazer Foundation.

We are grateful to Friendly Planet Travel, as they have provided a donor incentive by committing to contribute $1 for every $3 we raise through the campaign. You can learn more about this effort in the “Two Timely Funding Campaigns” section below.

- As you will read in the Health Program article, we are receiving increased field support in Cambodia from a now regular influx of volunteers, thanks to our new working relationship with The Bamboo Project.

- Finally, we just gained a new volunteer here in the states, who will be supporting both me and Tom. Gale Criswell first learned of Trailblazer Foundation during a presentation I gave at the local library, and was inspired enough to contact us about offering her help in the form of volunteer hours. Thank you Gale.

"development director" does not just lead an organization's fundraising activities. Rather, s/he should focus more broadly on bringing in new funding, needed skill sets, community connections, and other organizational "resources."

Trailblazer is honored to be receiving these diverse types of support from a broad suite of partners. We thank all of you for your support, and will continue our outreach efforts in hopes of gaining even more support for our rural community development work in Cambodia.

All the best,

Chris Coats

Health

Bringing the Strength of Bamboo to Trailblazer's Clean Water Initiatives

As mentioned in Executive Director Chris Coats' update above, in January, while on a visit to Cambodia, Chris and Tom Skeele, Trailblazer's Communications and Development Director, met with the local representative of The Bamboo Project, an international "voluntourism" travel company. During that meeting, we discussed the possibility of The Bamboo Project sending groups of volunteers to help with Trailblazer's work in Siem Reap province.

Fast forward to last month, and The Bamboo Project's first group of volunteers arrived at Trailblazer's office/work site in Siem Reap. As of this writing, there have been three groups, with plans to have two new groups each month through the rest of 2016 (and beyond, we hope). Each group has 5-8 volunteers, from as far away as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Portugal.

During their time volunteering, these nineteen hard working women have helped our local staff construct new bio-sand water filters, and then deliver those filters to families in our partner villages. A few of the volunteers also brought
Given the illiteracy rates among the villagers in Siem Reap province, the instructor often uses visual diagrams as part of his teaching.

Instructor and farmer trainees work together at the ground level to improve food security in Trailblazer's partner villages.

At the second of two recent trainings, the Ministry of Agriculture specialist works with a smaller group at one of the trainee's home.

Food Security

A Visual Look at One of Trailblazer's Agricultural Trainings

Trailblazer is committed to enhancing the “food security” of our partner villages. Historically, our effort to help farmers grow enough crops to feed their families was focused on drilling new wells, so the farmers had plenty of easily-accessed water for their agricultural pursuits. We have also provided a modest number of agricultural trainings (four trainings in 2015). This has changed for 2016.

This year we have committed to offering 30 agricultural trainings to farmers from across Siem Reap province. With up to ten trainees attending each workshop, we will provide upwards of 300 farmers with the enhanced skills they need to be more productive and successful in growing enough food to feed their families. As the average family size in Cambodia's Siem Reap province is six people, our thirty trainings will enhance the daily quantity and quality of food for upwards of 2,000 poor, rural villagers.

To give you a visual sense of these trainings, here are six photos from our most recent Soil Preparation and Management workshops.
What appears to be six principles for effective crop planting.

Instructor offers big ideas and hopes to these villagers for improving their family's food security.

For more information about our Food Security program, please visit our website.

---

**Education**

*Pedaling Their Way Out Of Poverty.....*

Do you remember when you got your first bicycle? And did you ever use it to get to school?

Last week, Trailblazer's team delivered 85 bicycles to five schools in three communes in Siem Reap province. These bikes were purchased with a $3,800 grant from the Greeley, Colorado based SSKIDS (Simple Suppers For Kids In Desperate Situations), and we are grateful to SSKIDS for their support.

During last week's delivery, we distributed thirty-seven bikes to three primary schools, and forty-eight bikes to two junior high schools. A larger number of bikes went to junior high school students, because typically these students need to travel further to get to their school (as not every village has a junior high school, these schools are often shared between villages).

In addition to Trailblazer's commitment to building a new school each year, we also annually deliver 100+ bicycles to students in need of transportation to their school - as a way of reducing another barrier to these kids getting an education. Without a bicycle, many students would simply drop out of school (particularly junior and senior high school students, because their school is just too far away for walking).

For 2016, Trailblazer Foundation has committed to delivering 130 bicycles. Half way through the year, we have already met 65% of our goal.

You can support the purchase and distribution of additional bikes at the "Donation for Education" box at this link: [https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/donate2.html](https://www.thetrailblazerfoundation.org/donate2.html).

For more information about our Education program, please visit our website.
Economic Development

College Students Visit Siem Reap to Help Design Farmers’ Co-op Project

Two graduate students from Indiana University, working working through the international health program GlobeMed, recently finished a month internship in Siem Reap. There, Jen Maler and La Erh worked with our local staff at Trailblazer Angkor to further design a farmer's cooperative project we hope to launch early next year.

Our plan is to work with trainees from our agricultural workshops, and other farmers in Siem Reap province, to launch a farmers' cooperative, through which rural farmers would grow crops specifically for the tourist restaurant market in Siem Reap, and sell those crops to cooperating restaurants and hotels.

GlobeMed, with whom Trailblazer has partnered for the last few years, aims to strengthen the movement for global health equity by pairing university students with grassroots organizations to address health disparities in developing countries. The GlobeMed network engages over 2,000 undergraduates at 56 university-based chapters throughout the world, and Trailblazer is pleased to be a recipient of these great partnerships.

As part of providing us with some valuable insights and recommendations about how to design a successful farmers' co-op, Jen and La worked with our water filter, well-drilling and agricultural trainings teams (as each of these efforts ties into the farmers' co-op, with respect to providing our village partners with the skills and equipment they need to raise sufficient crops to sell). We look forward to sharing the result of our new project design when we launch the farmer's cooperative in 2017.

For more information about our Economic Development program, please visit our website.

Staff/Board Profile

Meet Jamie Reilly, A New Member of Our Board of Directors

Jamie is a Bostonian who, after college, realized there was much to explore outside of Route 128. In 2001, Jamie got his first exposure to the rest of the world, during six months of travel that took him to Spain, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina.

Upon returning to the United States, Jamie settled in the Jackson Hole area of Wyoming. There, he gained his appreciation for the local natural and human communities. Jamie spent his time hiking, backpacking, biking, and snowboarding, as well as developing his love for the stage (where he was very active in the local theatre, and helped create an improv comedy troupe - "Out of Thin Air").
Later, Jamie traveled to South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia, including visiting Trailblazer's program in Cambodia. He has since returned to the Jackson Hole area, has worked with several international development organizations, and served on an advisory board for Coaches Across Continents. Jamie joined Trailblazer's Board in May 2016.

You can learn more about the rest of our Board of Directors on our [website](#).

---

**Two Timely Funding Campaigns**

**A Second New Work Truck**

At the end of July, we will conclude a two-month campaign to raise another $10,000, to purchase a second work truck for our team in Cambodia. Much to our chagrin, both of our trucks came to the end of their road this year. While both trucks earned this well-deserved break (we've had them for seven and nine years respectively), we had hoped they would last through 2016. As such, buying two new trucks was not part of our expense budget for this year.

As was mentioned above, we have partnered with Friendly Planet Travel on this fundraising campaign. This renowned international travel company has committing to donating $1 for every $3 we raise (or $2,500 of our $10,000 goal).

So far, we have three of the four wheels on the ground (i.e., we have secured funding for three-quarters of a new truck). If you would like to help us reach our goal, you can make a contribution at the website below.

Equally valuable to Trailblazer is for you to share this campaign information with your community, via your social media and/or email lists. We would be grateful for whatever you might do to promote this campaign and website. Again, you can use the following link.


**Completing Our New School - A Worthwhile Investment**

A few weeks ago, we sent out a fundraising appeal to our supporters, asking you to contribute to the construction of a new school we are building this year. The primary school we are building will serve approximately 600 students, from kindergarten to sixth grade. Students will come from seven nearby villages to attend one of two four-hour sessions of school each weekday.

Your support now will ensure that our school construction project is completed in a timely manner, and that children from seven poor villages in Cambodia can know they have a school of their own.

You can make an online donation, with a credit card, at [this link on our website](#). There, under "Program Specific Contributions," you will see a "Donation for Education" box, where we are seeking "a buck a brick" contributions for our school construction project.

Or, you can send a check to: Trailblazer Foundation, PO Box 3694, Jackson Wyoming 83001 USA.
Thank you for your consideration. Together, we can ensure that children in Cambodia’s Siem Reap province are given the place and tools they need to study and learn their way out of poverty.

---

**A Final Word....**

In the midst of sharing with you - through our newsletter - the important work we do in Cambodia, and the progress we make each quarter, we at Trailblazer Foundation sometimes lose sight of the reason why. Why do we do what we do? The answer is simple - the people of Cambodia. To serve as a reminder to all of us about that "why," here are our favorite images of our beneficiaries from the last three months.