Siem Reap is ranked as the sixth largest Province in Cambodia, the largest portion of the Province is demarcated by the Tonle Sap Lake. The Province is best known for the site of Angkor Wat temple ruins that are preserved by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, which attracts more than 5 million tourists who visit annually. The Province is located in the western part of the country, which has a total population of 1,007,000 and is divided into 12 sub-districts.

The livelihoods of local residents depend on rice planting, animal raising, crop subsidiary plantation, and in the fishery domain, but the Province still remains one of the poorest Provinces in the country. Thirty eight percent of the population lives under the poverty line - largely in the rural areas where they earn approximately 3,200 Riel per day (roughly equivalent to $0.80 USD). Presently, only about 58 percent of households have access to electricity, and only 55 percent of households have access to clean water - mainly in the town.

Most of the rural communities in this Province still live in poor hygienic and unsanitary situations, which has led to many waterborne diseases from generation to generation. Many rural areas are in need of health care and hygiene education. The Commune Health Care Center and Prevalent Public Health Sector are not yet available in all communes. Seventy percent of rural schools do not have access to clean water and students drink untreated water if they feel it looks clear enough. Diarrhea and other waterborne illnesses are threatening the learning progress of the rural students and have negatively affected school attendance. Having access to clean water is the biggest challenge in the daily lives for the children and community members living in the rural areas of Siem Reap.
Kok Kreul Primary School

Safe Drinking Water Will Give a Small Community Big Results

“Our school has no access to clean and safe water even proper sanitation facilities, so everyone has to sort this out by their own, with many students bringing water from home. We face waterborne illnesses among our students, and this impacts school attendance. We wish to have clean and safe water available in the school for the sake of everyone here.”

- Mr. Song Sou, School Headmaster
Kok Kreul is the local primary school located in Kok Kreul Village of Leang Dai Commune within Angkor Thom District of Siem Reap Province. Income depend on rice planting, crop subsidiary plantation, raising farm animals. Some villagers are migrating away to work as laborers in the city of Siem Reap, while others commute to neighboring countries. The school and village both face health and economic challenges from lack of access to clean, safe water and electricity. Bottled water is too expensive for most to purchase, so villagers and students are forced to use untreated water from the nearby contaminated wells and ponds.

Because the majority of local community members and children of Kok Kreul Village drink untreated water, waterborne illnesses are among the top health risk concerns. Mr. Song Sou, school principal, explained that the school has no piped water supply. They have two boreholes that are the primary water sources, no water treatment facility in the school, or even proper sanitation facilities. The principal wishes for clean and safe water and proper sanitation facilities available in the school in hopes of eliminating health risk concerns resulting from the use of unsafe water, spreading of germ and reducing the spending on health care costs for the community. Overall, this will help them improve school attendance.

Starbucks Foundation expands clean drinking water access and hygiene education in rural Siem Reap Province school

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Number of Students: 129
GPS Coordinates: 13.492849, 103.844701
Village Population: 695
Number of Households: 154
Planet Water Foundation is a U.S.-based non-profit that develops strategic partnerships that support Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts that align with four of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Quality Education; Gender Equality; Reduced Inequalities; and Clean Water and Sanitation. Project 24 programs and initiatives support these four SDGs with longitudinal support in each community for five years.

Since 2015, Project 24 is Planet Water Foundation’s World Water Day advocacy and engagement platform the focuses on the world’s critical need to bring an end to water poverty.

“My school has no clean water for drinking, and I don’t have money to buy bottled water, so my parent boil water for me. I have had diarrhea and dehydration many times because of the bad water at home. In school we do not have drinking water in the school.”
- Nhoung Sreo Pao, sixth grade student

“Here we do not have clean and safe water, even water treatment. Water from the borehole is unsafe and my students have to bring water from their home. This challenge is unresolved, so our students suffer from diarrhea, dengue fever and typhoid fever – all resulting from a lack of drinking water and sanitation. They cannot afford bottled water, so we wish to have access to clean and safe water in our school.”
- Mr. Reth Roth, Grade 5 Teacher