Providing Clean Water in

Siem Reap, Cambodia

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.
Au Rumchek Primary School

Rural Cambodia school will be location for clean water system that will change lives

“My school doesn’t have drinking water, so my mom boils water for me every day. I want to have good drinking water in my school so that my mom does not need to boil water for me.”

- Khai Yeng, Grade 5 Student
Au Rumchek is the local primary school of Au Rumchek village located in Sreno Commune within the Varin District of Siem Reap Province. Livelihoods 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. 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, 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 Au Rumchek Village drink untreated water, waterborne illnesses are among the top health risk concerns. Miss Si Bora, school principal, explained that because the school is located far away from the town, they are challenged with water supply and electricity issues. Students are often absent from their classes due to chronic waterborne illnesses, thus requiring their families to spend money for medical treatment, which is often unaffordable. The principal wishes for clean water for the village and the school, in hopes of alleviating waterborne diseases and reducing health care costs for the community. Improving school attendance is his primary concern for long term success for the community.

Ending water collection from contaminated ponds and wells will set school children on the path to a healthy future
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.

“Our school is located far away from the town and medical center and we have been challenged with clean and safe water long time ago. We do not have the budget to buy bottled water for everyone, so we all wish that we could have easy access to clean and safe water in our school for the sake of the students and teachers here.”
- Mr. Mok Rumdos, School Headmaster

“Our village is the poorest among the other villages in this area. My villagers earn about $3.50 USD daily and 102 households have no electricity, no piped water supply in the village, and every household has to treat their own water because we lack a water supply in the village.”
- Mr. Yam Sor, Village Leader