



Cambodian
Children's Trust

Annual Impact Report 2023



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Who We Are



Cambodia is dependent on a privatised system of social support controlled by foreign charities. We're on a mission to change that.

We are working to build a public social protection system, run by local communities, to dismantle the structural root causes of poverty with an upstream initiative called The Village Hive Project.

Based in Battambang, Cambodia, the Village Hive is built on a foundation of collaborative community engagements with the goal of eliminating dependence on charity and restoring local sovereignty.

The Village Hive strengthens universal public services and establishes early intervention public programs. By prioritising these safeguards, the Village Hive raises the standard of living for entire communities and empowers Cambodian people to rise to the challenge of transforming their own world.

Our Shared Vision

Igniting local wisdom to dismantle the structural root causes of poverty and end the dependence on charity.

Our Shared Mission

To build a sustainable, community-owned public social protection system for Cambodia.

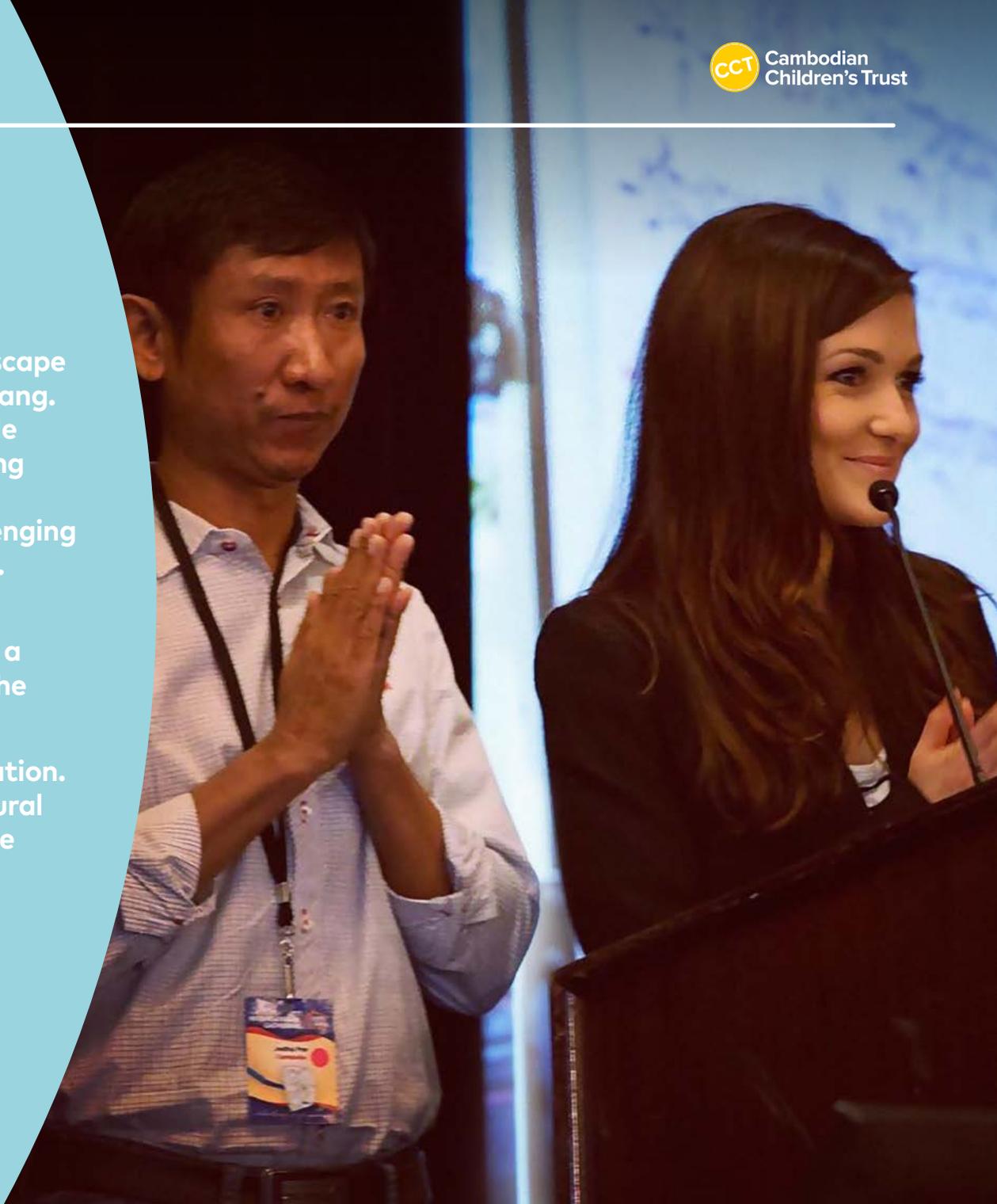
Our Journey

Our journey began in 2007 when Pon Jedtha and Tara Winkler established CCT to help 14 children escape from a corrupt and abusive orphanage in Battambang. Initially, CCT was set up as an orphanage to provide the children with a safe new home. Upon discovering they weren't orphans and learning of Cambodia's orphanage crisis, Tara and Jedtha began the challenging journey of reuniting the children with their families.

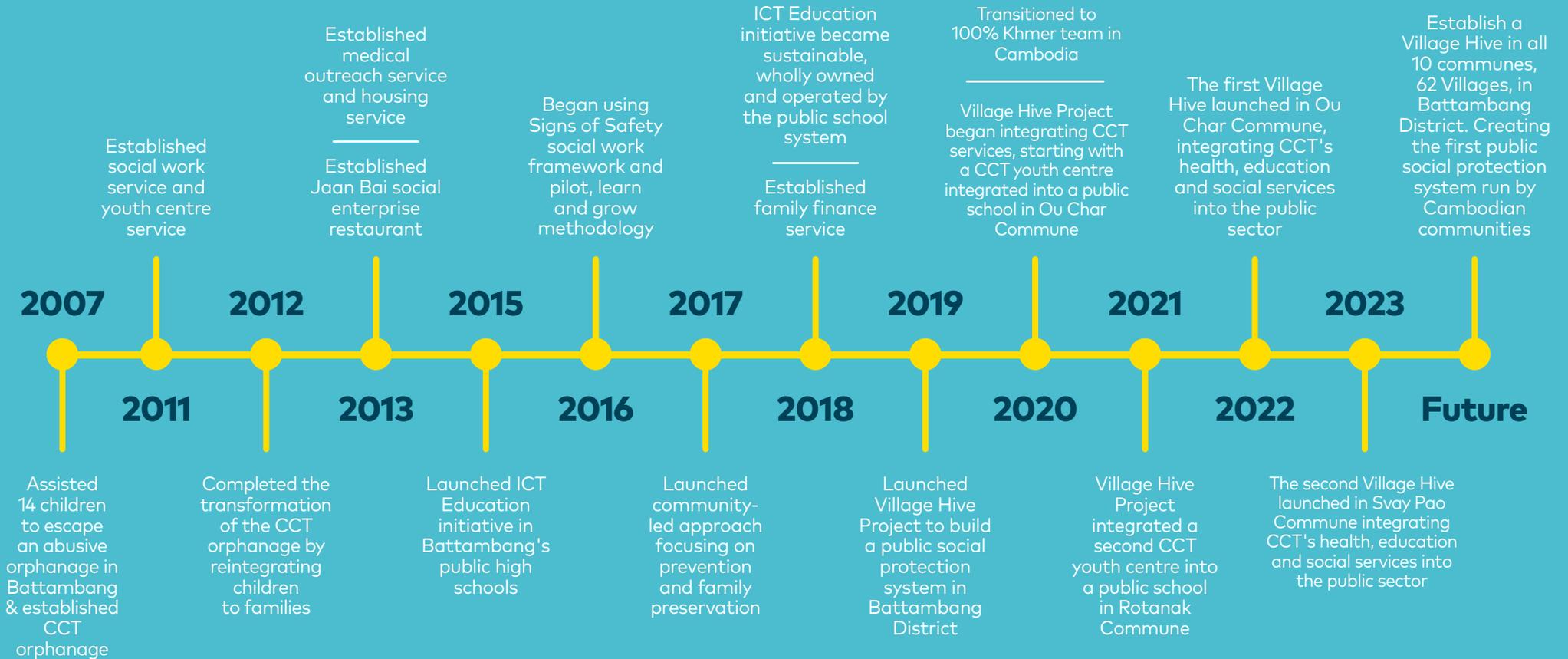
By 2012, CCT had become the first organisation in Cambodia to transform from an orphanage into a family-based care program and has been leading the care reform movement ever since.

In 2019, CCT underwent an even bigger transformation. With a new singular vision to dismantle the structural root causes of the orphanage crisis, the Village Hive Project was launched.

Today, our role is no longer just paternalistically delivering direct social services on behalf of Cambodian communities. We are building a public social protection system, run by the community for the community, that will eradicate poverty and eliminate dependence on charity.



16 Years of Evolution



Global Impact

Watch TED Talk,
Why we need to end the era of orphanages, 2016



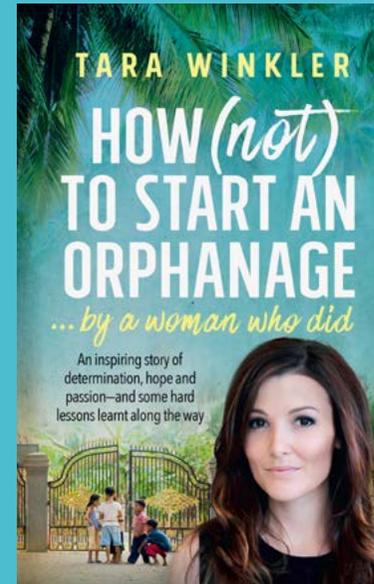
Watch ABC Australian Story,
The House of Tara,
2014



Listen to testimony at the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into Modern Slavery, 2017



Read the book, How (Not) to Start an Orphanage



2023 Highlights

39,178 people in **10 villages** in Svay Pao and Ou Char Communes now have a Village Hive social protection system

A second Village Hive was established in Svay Pao Commune, becoming the official public social protection system for **21,338 people across 4 villages**

35,180 people now receive better quality public healthcare from the Village Health Clinic in Svay Pao commune due to renovations, additional equipment and resources, training, and supplementary services

1549 students in **4** public primary schools in Village Hive Communes now receive higher quality education from enhanced infrastructure, equipment, human resources and curriculums

192 students benefited from essential services from an after-school care program in their public school

67% increase in calls to the Hotline directly from the community, demonstrating increased reach and accessibility of public social services journey

163 public school teachers were trained in computer literacy, child protection, and management skills

443 families comprising **2,210 people**, were empowered to escape multidimensional poverty through the Village Hive Early Intervention Journey

Zero reports of domestic violence in the families living in the Village Hive communes

22,850 nutritious meals were served to vulnerable children

Social workers provided counselling services to **316 families**, comprising 1,557 people, improving family dynamics and alleviating stress in the household

26 families were supported to improve their housing, including repairs, renovations and builds, connecting to utilities and sanitation facilities and finding affordable rentals

767 people in 150 families were provided with life-saving health care and family planning via the Village Hive home nursing service

249 families achieved financial resilience and safely exited Village Hive support into independence

117 families, were provided with support payments totalling **\$64,926 USD** to prevent them from falling into extreme poverty while they worked through the Village Hive Early Intervention Journey

54 families, were provided **\$13,700 USD** capital to set up businesses

1,187 children were prevented from being separated from their families

84 families were coached in financial literacy to strengthen their capacity to prioritise their expenditure and budget

52 families participated in community savings groups

148 staff members from the public social services workforce underwent comprehensive training through 45 workshops, coaching, and mentoring visits to enhance their capacity to deliver Village Hive services

Introduction By Tara Winkler



**BREAK THE CYCLE
OF POVERTY** *charity*

For many, 2023 was another challenging year. In the face of cascading global crises, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and paralysed with despair. I believe the antidote to this despair is hope – not the passive form of hope that comes with wishful thinking, but the hope you use as a verb – with its sleeves rolled up!

Through this report, we will be bringing you a big injection of proactive hope. Despite being a small, grassroots organisation, we have taken another significant step forward to create a blueprint that we believe will transform the international development sector and prove it's possible to change the system that causes communities to be dependent on charity.

The root cause of this dependency lies in the current system's tendency to paternalistically address the symptoms of poverty without addressing its underlying causes. If we continue on this path, global inequality will continue to rise, and we will fall short of achieving the first Sustainable Development Goal to eradicate poverty by 2030.

The issue with the current system is that foreign-funded charities have effectively colonised countries like Cambodia by controlling a privatised system of social welfare. Charities have full discretion over what services they provide and who can access them, resulting in unequal access for many. This fragmented and duplicated allocation of resources through privatised charity-controlled services fails to establish a cohesive system that communities can rely on. When multiple charities operate in the same community, some people receive duplicate services from several charities, while others are overlooked entirely.

When foreign-funded charities are in control of a privatised social protection system, their donations tend to be invested downstream into crisis support services, akin to ambulances at the bottom of the cliff. This emphasis on crisis intervention stems from the fact that crises evoke strong emotional responses and therefore appeal to donors. When donations predominantly flow downstream to assist people after harm has already occurred, a crisis-driven system is created. This perpetuates a cycle of ongoing need, ensuring that charities have a steady stream of work for generations to come.

Effective charities should aim to stem the stream of crisis and need by actively working towards their own redundancy. Crafting an actionable exit strategy doesn't require a magic wand. We don't even need to solve all problems before we exit. Many issues aren't realistically solvable in our lifetime. All we need to do to have a realistic exit strategy is to shift our focus from what needs to be solved to who is best placed to solve it.

CCT used to deliver health, education, housing, nutrition, and income generation services – all from our own private facilities. If we kept going as we were, CCT would need to remain in Battambang forever. Continuing to deliver essential services on behalf of the local communities is the antithesis of empowerment.

When we started focusing on who should be delivering these services, the solution became clear, and the Village Hive Project was born.

By transferring our privately run services into the public sector and shifting the power and control to local community leaders, we began systematically working ourselves out of a job.

Introduction By Tara Winkler

If this approach was adopted by all foreign-funded charities – there are over 6,000 charities in Cambodia alone – imagine what could be achieved. If all donations were channelled into public facilities a hugely impactful paradigm shift would emerge. If all the innovative programs, resources, and training that charities provide converged within the same public schools, health clinics, hospitals, and social services, it would result in a massive reduction of overheads.

It would avoid the unnecessary duplication of resources. It would prevent the endless reinvention of the wheel. Services would be distributed equitably to all members of the community. No institutional knowledge would be lost when charities wind up their projects or move on to different regions. The local communities would retain the fruits of this collective effort.

Transitioning from investing donations into private charity-controlled services to public community-owned services fosters what we term "operational sustainability".

Operational sustainability refers to the local community's ability to deliver its own vital social services without relying on the knowledge, expertise and institutional frameworks of charities. A lack of operational sustainability presents a risk to communities if charities lose funding or close down prematurely. When we finish rolling out the Village Hive to the entire Battambang District, the communities will retain all the knowledge and wherewithal to continue to deliver the services in our absence.

In time, we're confident the Village Hive will also achieve financial sustainability as the Cambodian Government grows its capacity to fund social services. As you'll read in this report, we are already seeing evidence of this in the two Village Hive communes that have injected considerable funds and resources into their Village Hive from their own budgets.



Watch this animation to see how we're Breaking The Cycle of Charity



Introduction By Tara Winkler

The only downside to centralising our efforts through the public system would be that charities would lose their visibility and branding, which would be a significant blow to the moral 'prestige' of many charity founders and directors. They would no longer be able to say, 'Look! Here is our school. Here is our community centre'. But this work is not, and was never, ours to begin with. Charities should ultimately be accountable to the local communities they operate in. These projects are theirs. Relinquishing paternalistic ownership would help all of us working in and supporting international charities to refocus on our common goal of breaking the cycle of poverty.

Over this past year, CCT has continued to build a robust evidence base to prove it is possible to integrate charity services into the public sector to create a healthy, flourishing society with high-quality universal public services. If we change the system by shifting from private, charity-delivered programs to public community-delivered programs and then invest upstream in prevention and early intervention programs – like public health, public education and public housing – we will quickly arrive at a day in which communities in Cambodia would no longer need to be rescued by charities.

With support from our small but passionate team of supporters, we have already handed over the reins and established a Village Hive in two out of ten communes in Battambang District, meaning a population of over 35,000 people now have a public social protection system that they own and operate. We are amazed by how straightforward this process has been. It all comes down to the enthusiasm of the communities in Battambang. This is what they want, and so they are moving heaven and earth to make it so.

The only challenge we face is getting enough funding to see it through. If we can complete one commune a year, it will take another eight years and approximately 8 million USD to complete. Going against the grain and doing things differently by shifting the power to local people scares a lot of institutional donors, and systems change work doesn't quite pull on the heartstrings in the same way crisis work does, so fundraising has been tough.

That's why, in this report, you will also see an initiative we're working on to cultivate trusted global networks to give donors the confidence to invest in projects like the Village Hive.

We couldn't be more excited to share the progress of this last year with you. So, roll up your sleeves and get ready for a big injection of proactive hope as you join us in breaking the cycle of poverty by breaking the cycle of charity.

With thanks and gratitude,



Tara Winkler
Co-Founder, CCT

Private Charity Controlled System

People accessing essential services from foreign controlled charities



A charity-controlled social protection system that is aligned to the goals of foreign donors

NGO private education

NGO healthcare

NGO cash payment and emergency support

NGO housing

NGO social workers

NGO child protection

AN UNDER-RESOURCED, PUBLIC SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

COMM



This system results in too many people falling through the cracks, unable to access privatised, disjointed services. It leads to the ongoing dependency on charities.

Foreign Power



Public Community Controlled System

People accessing essential services from local public facilities



CAMBODIAN CHILDREN'S TRUST

CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT

A local-controlled social protection system that is aligned to the goals of Cambodian communities



POWER

COMMUNE INVESTMENT PLAN



POWER

Local Power

This system raises the standard of living through high-quality public services that are available to the whole community. It leads to empowered communities with sovereignty over their own development.

About the Village Hive Project



We are striving towards a goal that few organisations ever achieve – lasting systemic change and our own redundancy.

Since 2007, we have been delivering essential social services in Battambang District. The services we have been delivering – such as health, education, housing, employment, and social support – are essential for realising fundamental human rights. However, delivering these services indefinitely on behalf of the local council in Battambang District is not sustainable or empowering.

To ensure the sustainability of our work, we have shifted our approach to focus on establishing a Village Hive public social protection system in all ten communes and 62 villages in Battambang District that is owned and operated by local councils.

The Village Hive is being built through collaborative co-creation with each commune. All the services we have been operating privately and the institutional knowledge developed over 16 years are being integrated into the public sector. Our staff are being transferred to join the public sector, and we are investing in the professional development of the public health, education and social services workforce.

The first Village Hive was established in 2022 in Ou Char Commune. In 2023, the second Village Hive was established in Svay Pao Commune.

We aim to establish one Village Hive per commune per year. With ten communes in Battambang District, we are set to complete the Village Hive Project by 2032.

A longitudinal study is being conducted across the entire lifespan of the Village Hive Project (see page 82) to create an evidence base that will support the Cambodian Government in scaling into other districts across Cambodia.

After 2032, we will no longer need to deliver essential social services in Battambang District.



Rollout of Village Hive Public Social Protection System in Battambang District Population 116,793

Services:



Education

● = integrated

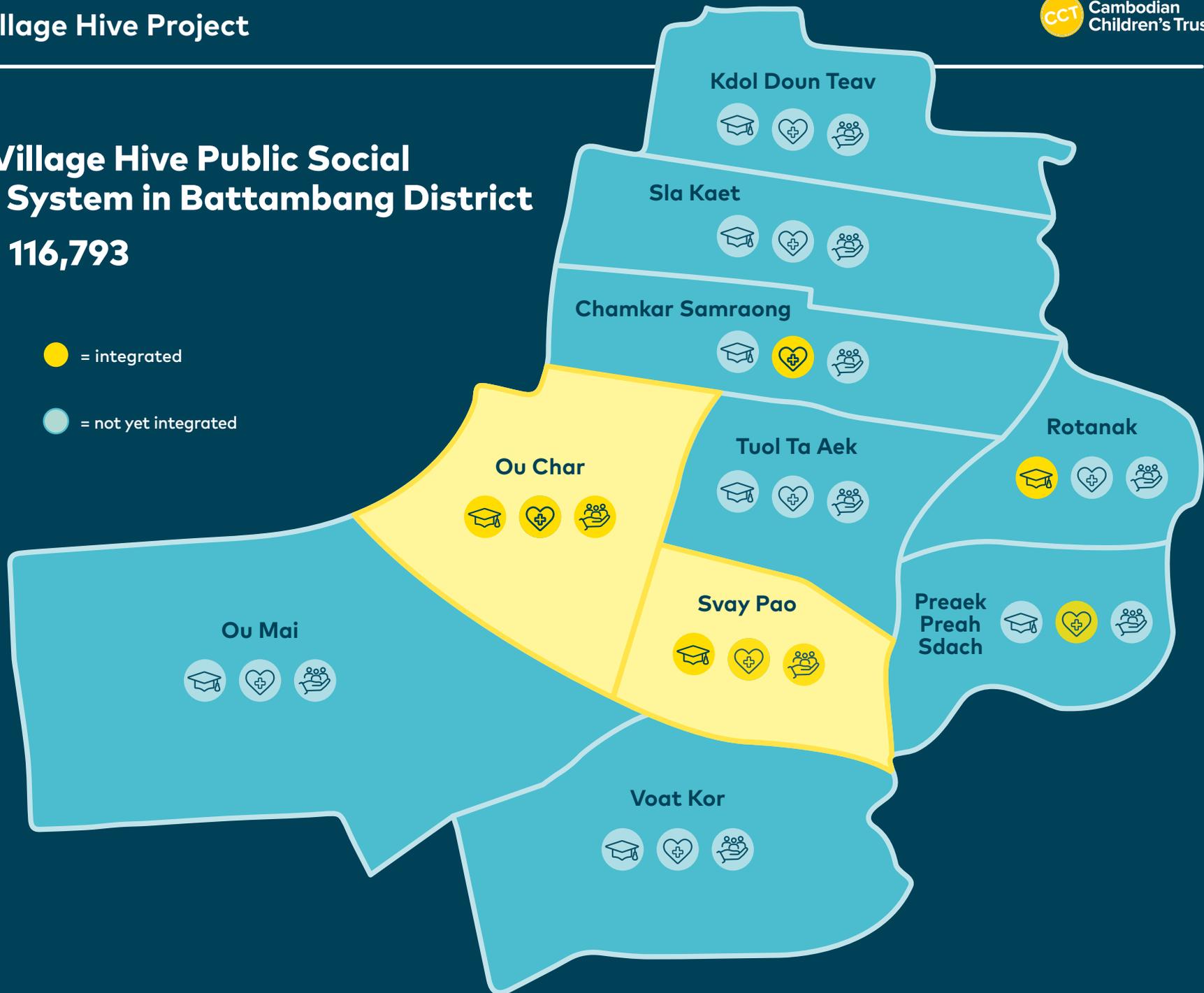


Health

● = not yet integrated



Social Work



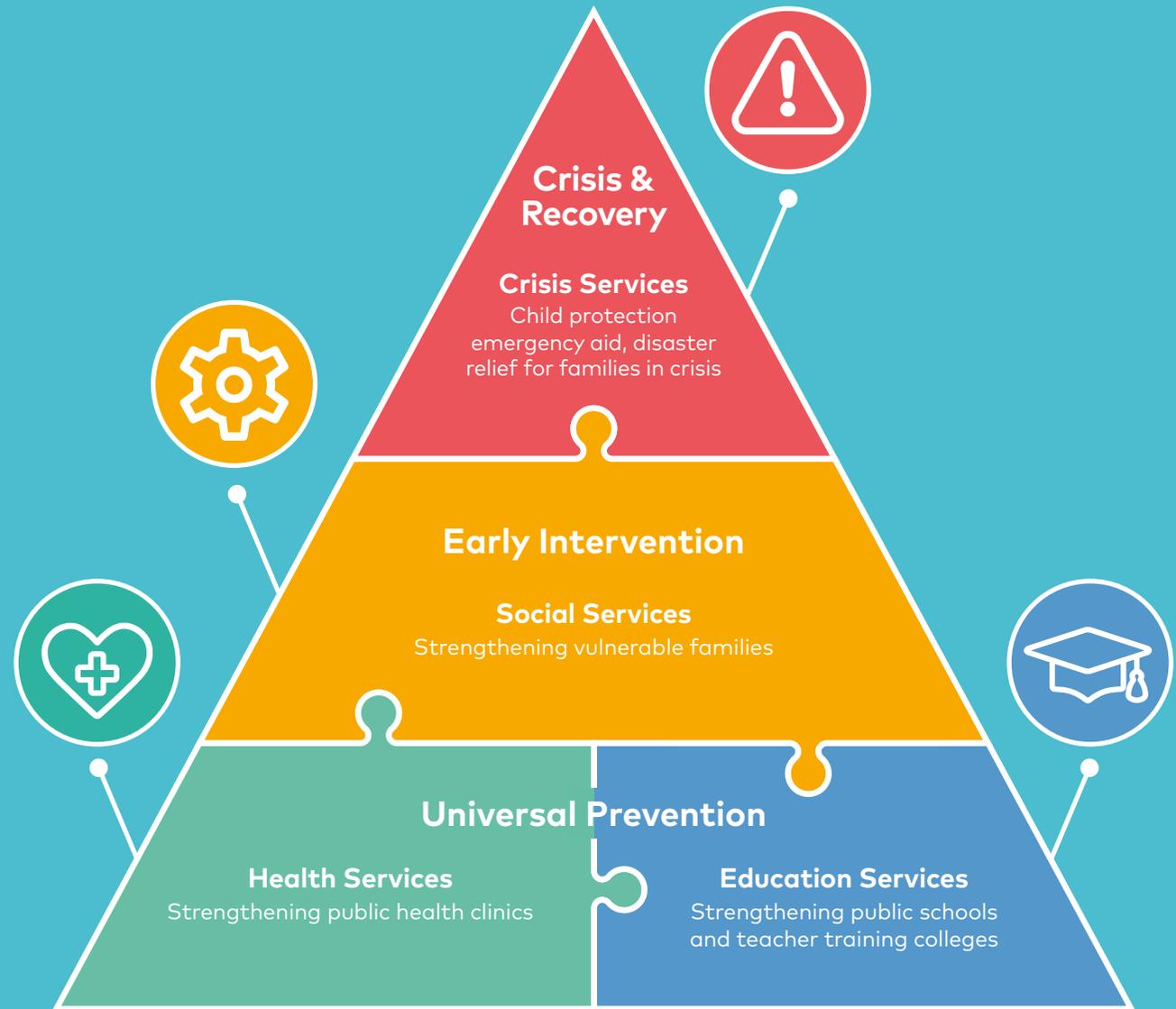
The Village Hive Model

This graphic illustrates the upstream approach of the Village Hive, prioritising prevention and early intervention.

The Village Hive Project is built on a three-tiered social services model that untangles the complex, interwoven dimensions of poverty.

It is an upstream model that prioritises Universal Prevention and Early Intervention services to prevent people from falling into crisis, reducing the demand for costly Crisis and Recovery services.

 To understand more about the Village Hive model, do a deep dive to see how it works.



How we're building the Village Hive Project



Co-creation and raising critical consciousness

Local leaders hold ancestral and cultural wisdom and contextual knowledge of their community's strengths and vulnerabilities. They have deep, trusting connections within their communities and are a powerful source for change when empowered with the necessary resources.

Throughout the year, we have supported local leaders in Svay Pao Commune to step into their rightful roles as leaders of their Village Hive through a practice of conscientisation.

Conscientisation is a concept developed by the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. It refers to the process of developing a critical awareness of social realities through reflection and action in order to understand root causes of failings in aid and development.

We have utilised a co-creation process to inform every stage of the Village Hive Project design, execution and evolution. Co-creating the Village Hive has led to equitable, inclusive programs and a sense of community-wide investment and ownership that ensures the sustainability of high-quality service delivery.



114

co-creation meetings were conducted, with over **150 participants** attending

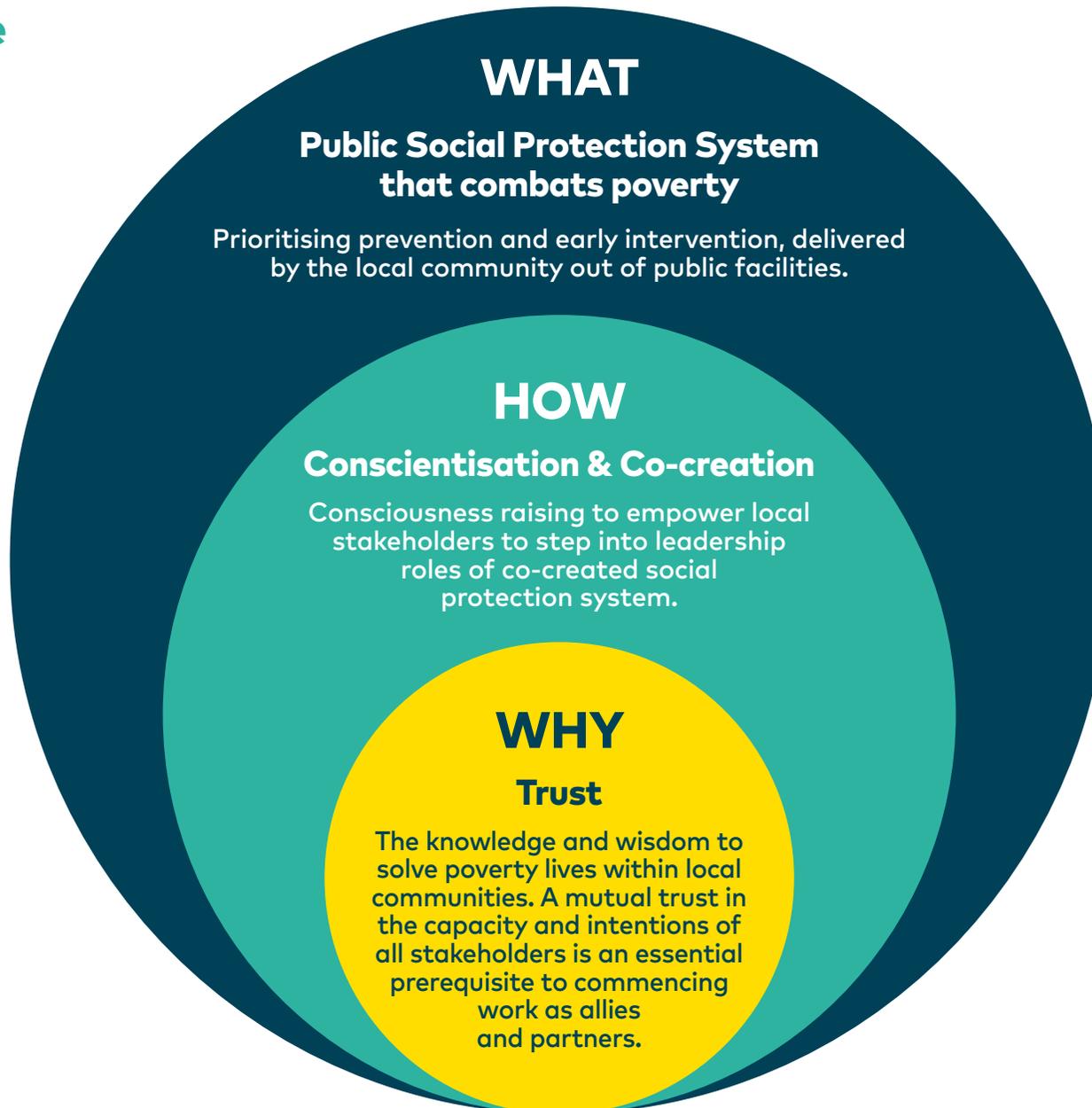
148

staff from the public social services workforce have been trained to provide Village Hive services in Battambang District via **45** trainings, workshops, coaching and mentoring visits

78

meetings were conducted with national, provincial, and district-level governments to discuss the Village Hive Project

The Village Hive Golden Circle



Anti-corruption and anti-fraud framework

The Village Hive Project offers a unique opportunity to address the issue of systemic corruption. While not an issue exclusive to Cambodia or countries in the Global South, it remains an obstacle that needs to be overcome.

We believe that the issue of corruption will never be resolved if charities continue to circumvent the problem by maintaining control of a privatised social protection system. The issue of institutional corruption can be managed by developing transparent systems that build trust and accountability.

The Village Hive Project has been built on a foundation of anti-corruption frameworks. Before launching the first Village Hive in 2022, we collaborated with local leadership to co-create zero-tolerance anti-corruption policies and protocols.

The checks and balances in place to account for every dollar spent include implementing financial controls, including the segregation of duties, dual signatories, audit trails, dedicated bank accounts, and a ledger system. Budget workshops, audits, monthly reconciliations, spot checks and ongoing coaching and training in fiscal management are also part of the anti-corruption framework.

CCT's monitoring and evaluation and communications teams ride along with the public workforce social workers, nurses and teachers every week to capture the data and stories essential to building a robust evidence base. This activity also provides transparency and visibility into the Village Hive operations.

The local leaders have built these anti-corruption measures into the Village Hive because they understand that the project's success resides in cultivating radical trust to allow local people to rise to the challenge of transforming their own world.



2023 Report & Impact



In 2023, we accomplished several important milestones. Firstly, we launched a new Village Hive in Svay Pao Commune.

Additionally, we successfully completed a full year of operations in our initial Village Hive located in Ou Char Commune. As a result of these efforts, both communes have achieved operational sustainability.

This means that 39,178 individuals across ten villages now have access to the Village Hive public social protection system, providing them with a safety net they can depend on.

Furthermore, the insights gained from our experiences in 2023 have allowed us to refine our strategic direction, emphasising scalability and ensuring our operational redundancy.

Conscientisation with CCT's Co-Founder Pon Jedtha

For years, I have dreamt of seeing my community, Battambang, thrive with a higher standard of living for all people without the need for widespread dependency on charity. Finally, that dream is becoming a reality with the expanding rollout of the Village Hive social protection system.

The recipe that has made the Village Hive the success it is today includes practical things like developing public schools and public health clinics, ensuring high-quality social work with holistic early intervention programs, and careful budgeting and planning.

However, the recipe also includes something intangible. Traditional Khmer Buddhism teaches us that we cannot survive with material sustenance alone. We also need the sustenance of wisdom, knowledge and good ideas.

At the heart of the Village Hive Project is the idea that it's possible to completely reimagine the way we develop our Cambodian communities. If we keep doing things the way they've always been done, nothing will change, and Cambodia will remain as poor and dependent as it is today.

At CCT, we have never been afraid of our mistakes. We see them as opportunities to learn, grow, improve and raise the bar. In 2019, we realised we had hit a dead end.

If CCT continued down the same path we were on, Battambang would be dependent on us delivering essential services forever. A small number of children and families would be helped, but many more would slip through the cracks, unable to access universal services that should be a fundamental human right. We believe that our people deserve more than that, more than what charity can ever offer.

We deserve a community that can stand on its own and care for its people. Our children, and our children's children, should grow up knowing the safety of a well-resourced community. Khmer is a strong and powerful culture. We can and will rise to build our communities, and the Village Hive provides us with the roadmap.

The Village Hive Project has been successfully embedded into two of the ten communes in Battambang District. I wish to say a heartfelt thanks to our donors who are standing with us to support this groundbreaking initiative.

Orkun Chren (thank you),



Pon Jedtha
Co Founder and Director

Svay Pao Village Hive

We are proud to announce that a second Village Hive opened in Svay Pao Commune.

Svay Pao is home to 21,338 people, comprising 3,135 families, who live across four villages. It is one of the largest and most densely populated communes due to it being centrally located in the heart of Battambang District. It boasts the famous White Elephant Pagoda, established in 1904, the Provincial Museum, and the Psar Nat central market of Battambang.

Urban poverty levels are high in this commune with many slum dwellings by the railway line. It is also now home to the second Village Hive in Battambang District after the official handover ceremony on December 18, 2023.



We bring you a report from Svay Pao's Commune Chief, **Hum Sokvannaroth**

Our community is full of joy and happiness to welcome the Village Hive to our Svay Pao Commune.

I first learnt about CCT's Village Hive Project from our neighbouring commune in Ou Char. I did my research and asked around to get more knowledge and understanding from the senior leadership in Ou Char, who have experience working with this project for one year already, and I learnt from them that the Village Hive was doing so much to support vulnerable people.

I am so happy that CCT also established a Village Hive in Svay Pao. We signed the handover MOU on the 31st of July, 2023, and have been running the Village Hive for four months now. Already, we are seeing great results.

The Village Hive is aligned with our government policy introduced by Samdech Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of Cambodia. It compliments the government's low-income ID card scheme for families living in poverty who don't have jobs and uneducated children.

Before we had the Village Hive, one of our big challenges was that I needed more staff to do the outreach work to families in poverty. We only had one main social worker responsible for all four villages in our commune. When our citizens had problems, it was impossible for us to reach them in time.

With the Village Hive, CCT transferred their staff to Svay Pao, so we can now stay on top of all case management. We received two social worker staff members in our council office and four teacher staff members at our public school. I already have my whole team working on the Village Hive, too, and it has helped us a lot.

We are enrolling children in school and helping families to get stable jobs. We are improving our schools and health clinic. We have a Village Hive centre in Wat Kampheng Public School to provide vulnerable children with nutrition, life skills, computer classes, art classes, homework tuition, library reading, English language, storytelling, painting classes, and ethics classes.

We now also offer daycare services from our public school, so families have the opportunity to find jobs and stable incomes and don't have to worry about their children's supervision.

All of the children supported through our Village Hive are safe, with physical and mental improvement. We are fostering intelligence, resilience and vibrant spirits. With this support, in the future, they will surely become good people in our society.

The Village Hive is helping vulnerable families who live in poverty through the early intervention seven-step program.

These families don't have sufficient skills and struggle to maintain secure incomes. Their children face barriers to receiving an education. So far, the Village Hive is working directly with 28 of these families, 114 people, in Svay Pao Commune who are experiencing extreme hardship.

For me, collaborating with CCT on the Village Hive is such a great privilege. Seriously, establishing this project has been as easy as can be. It really has provided more help to our community than we could have ever asked for. Now that we have the Village Hive, no matter how hard the challenges our community is facing, it is no problem for us to help.



With the Village Hive embedded in Svay Pao, I feel like we have extra power, and we are the true leaders of this project, too. We lead the meetings with CCT every month to discuss the cases. We have two main project officers who lead the meetings and discuss what changes or improvements we need to make, as well as discuss difficult cases. I also join these meetings. Each of our members is responsible for the case management. If any problem arises in our community now, we will know.

For example, our community members will inform us if someone in our community is at risk. I will then go into the field with our social workers. In Svay Pao, we now have more than 30 active cases, and we have two social workers dividing the cases between them.

The social workers follow the Early Intervention Journey and check in with each case very often. We don't just give them a support payment and forget about them. We give them the skills and training to get employment or start a business. If we do not partner with the families and help them along each step of the journey, the result will be ineffective. So we always ensure we are walking every step with them till they can stand alone.

I can say that since CCT embedded the Village Hive in our community, the situation for our citizens is already better than before. Before, I knew that a lot of families were always struggling. They didn't have stable jobs, and a lot of families migrated away from our community. Now, when we learn about their case, we ask, 'What do you want to do? What support do you need?' Then, we come up with a plan together to help them and their children.

If parents migrate for work, their children don't end up going to school. But when parents have stable jobs and stable homes in our community, their children go to school regularly and get the education they need.

Some NGOs in our community are doing fieldwork and supporting families, but they only help selective cases and are not creating a system of social support. They often only support in some ways, like giving rice, and that is it. However, with our Village Hive, we don't exclude any cases, and we can help with every problem until the family is no longer in need.

I want more investment in our Village Hive because even though we are seeing poverty reducing, it is still not 100%. We have more work to do.

In the future, my hope as a Commune Chief is to see our people come to us when they have problems or struggles. I want them to trust they are safe and have support in our community. All together, we are now engaging in creating village safety for all our people.

Sincerely,



Hum Sokvannaroth
Svay Pao Sangkat Chief





Svay Pao Operational Report

The rollout in Svay Pao went smoothly throughout 2023 without any major hiccups or obstacles due to the passion and commitment that the community and local leadership have to this project.

The lessons learned from the first Village Hive in Svay Pao's neighbouring commune, Ou Char, which opened in 2022, also provided valuable guidance. The Ou Char commune council has been the biggest advocate for the rollout of the Village Hive into Svay Pao.

The frameworks and guidelines initially created for Ou Char's Village Hive were adapted for Svay Pao, streamlining and expediting the implementation process.

Local leadership from the commune council office, six public schools, and the village health clinic in Svay Pao underwent comprehensive training in child protection, financial management, anti-corruption, and fraud prevention.

We supported Svay Pao in conducting a mapping of their existing services to create a development plan for the public health and public education services in the commune. The co-creation plan resulted in upgrades to four focus areas, including improving infrastructure, interior renovations, curriculum and services, and human resources – more information on these activities is to follow.



Public Education in Svay Pao

Svay Pao has six public schools, comprising three primary schools and three high schools. We already had a relationship with the high schools as they have implemented our ICT curriculum for the past eight years.

The services mapping highlighted Svay Pao's public primary schools were in greater need than the high schools.

The primary schools were supported to develop adequate infrastructure, a positive learning environment in classrooms for all students, a robust and holistic curriculum and syllabus, provision of additional teachers and pedagogy training.



We bring you a report from Svay Pao's Vice Principal of Wat Kampheng Primary School, Nab Romdul

Our goal with the Village Hive is to see our community develop. CCT has embedded their projects into the community to lead by ourselves.

For now, we still work together with CCT on our Village Hive to help vulnerable children and support them with their education, social services, and health services.

So far, the Village Hive has given a lot of benefit to the children at our schools. Now, all children in our community can enrol in school and get an education. They can eat with a full stomach and have protection and safety in our community. On top of that, they can receive health services.

Another benefit of embedding the Village Hive into the Svay Pao community is that it gives us knowledge and understanding about how children are struggling in our community. We are now working together to provide all the opportunities for those children.

Most importantly, we are preventing children from falling behind and living on the streets, and instead, encouraging them all to go to school.

Before we received this project, I had so many worries in my heart. I was worried about children who didn't enrol in school, children living in poverty who didn't have rice to eat and didn't attend school; they were hanging out on the street, and their job was collecting scraps to earn money.

Too many families were living in poverty and using violence as a means to cope. Some families didn't have jobs.

Now, with the Village Hive, we see that children are enrolling in school, have enough food to eat, and are starting to live in stable conditions with safety.

Some families have already received stable jobs and earn enough income to support their families. The result is far different from before. Our community is living in more harmony than before.

Another addition to our school from the Village Hive is that we now operate a Village Hive centre from the school. When I became the leader in our school, I felt so happy to bring this project to our school.



I love this work so much because it is our responsibility and our role to help the next generation have an education so that they can serve our community.

One big change from the Village Hive is that CCT is no longer doing the work alone without the input of the community and commune. Working alone is not a good way to succeed.

Working together, we know the strengths and weaknesses, and then we have the discussion to help each other find the solution to run our program in a better way to help children in poverty.

In my opinion, if the other NGOs want to invest their programs in Cambodia and if they want their programs to be successful and sustainable in the long run, they need to collaborate with the community, village, and commune in the public system, working together so that all the benefits can last forever.

The biggest goal in my community is to see my community develop and not see a single child not attending school. Every one of them deserves education, good knowledge, and a good standard of living. It will make our community grow and make our nation progress.

Sincerely,



Nab Romdul
Vice Principal of Wat Kampheng Primary School



Education Outcomes 2023

Improving infrastructure

A public primary school in Svay Pao was supported to conduct repairs and renovations and build new infrastructure, including:

- Six toilets were built, including one for children with disabilities
- Handwashing facilities were installed to improve student hygiene
- Work was done to improve the school entrance by sealing the roads and pathways to ensure accessibility during the rainy season

700

(319 girls) students benefited from improved infrastructure at public schools in Svay Pao Commune



Improving classroom environments

A public primary school in Svay Pao was supported to ensure the classrooms were bright and inviting, that the lighting and equipment were adequate, and that they were accommodating to children with special needs. This included painting and installing fans and lights to improve classroom ventilation and lighting.

We installed two computer labs in Preah Monivong High School in Svay Pao Commune in 2015. However, the building was old and needed repairs. We supported the school in moving the computer labs to a different building; this included setting up the network cables, electricity supply and ventilation system.

"I was so excited after the classroom was renovated with new paint and set up with lights and fans. It makes me feel comfortable teaching. Before, it was difficult for me and my students. I can see how my students are feeling more engaged by their smiles."

– Lay Mom, Grade 5 teacher at Wat Kampheng Primary School.



Improving the curriculum and syllabus

Our youth centre services were transitioned to an after-school care program within Svay Pao's public school. The after-school care program was initially established for vulnerable children whose caregivers are enrolled in the Village Hive Early Intervention Journey.

Shortly after its launch, the after-school care program was opened to all children who attend primary school. Students from economically stable families can now access the after-school care program in their local primary school for a small fee of USD 19.50 per month.

This revenue stream for the schools helps to subsidise the activities for the vulnerable students whose families cannot pay while working towards improving their financial situation. A preschool program is also incorporated into the after-school care program.

The after-school care program provides clean water, sanitation facilities, nutritious meals, homework support, English and computer classes, remedial Maths and Khmer literacy tutoring, extracurricular activities including sports, arts and music, and life skills classes.

Two public high schools in Svay Pao Commune run an ICT curriculum that we co-designed and implemented in 2015.

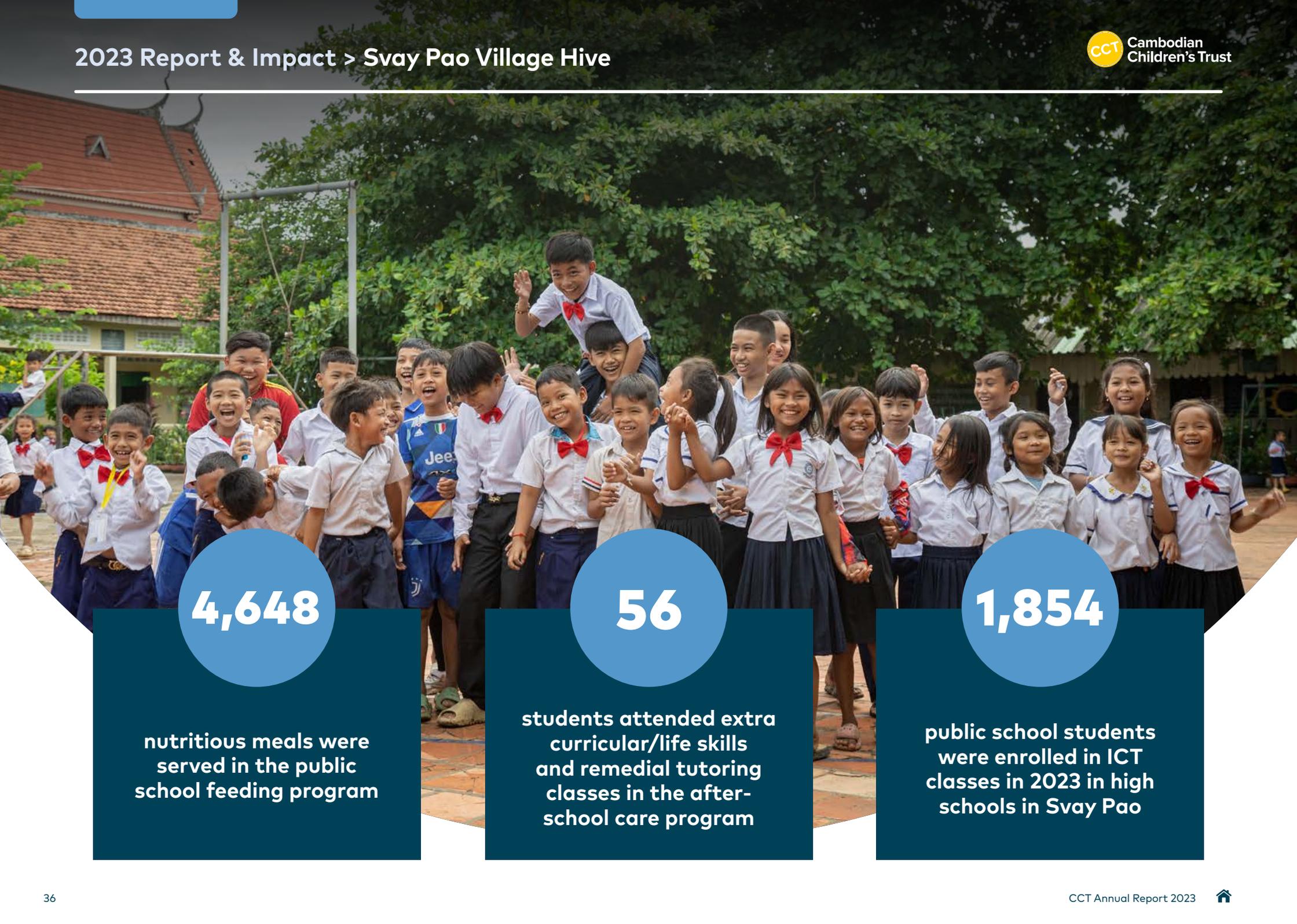
The curriculum covers the basics of computer hardware, email, word processing, mastering programming, and robotics. This allows students in Battambang to learn the crucial computing skills they need to gain employment. This program is now financially sustainable and no longer requires funding from CCT.

7

**(3 girls) children
attended preschool
classes in a Svay Pao
public school**

47

**children benefited
from after-school care
services in a Svay Pao
public school**



4,648

nutritious meals were served in the public school feeding program

56

students attended extra curricular/life skills and remedial tutoring classes in the after-school care program

1,854

public school students were enrolled in ICT classes in 2023 in high schools in Svay Pao

Resourcing and supporting teachers and school faculty

58

meetings were held with the six public schools in Svay Pao commune to ensure the public school teachers and faculty staff were adequately supported to perform their roles.

22

teaching staff were provided with child protection training, managing difficult behaviour and leadership skills.

4

teaching staff were transferred to join the public school workforce in September 2023 to operate the after-school care programs.





Public Health in Svay Pao

Svay Pao shares a public village health clinic with its neighbouring commune, Preaek Preah Sdach.

A population of **35,180 people from 12 villages** access health services from this clinic. A services mapping highlighted the most pressing needs in the Svay Pao Health Clinic.

The clinic was supported to develop adequate infrastructure, improve clinic equipment and supplies, resource and support clinic staff, and improve clinic services.



We bring you a report from Svay Pao's Health Clinic Director, Meas Sambath

The Village Hive Project has truly given a lot of benefits to the community by providing support for our local health clinic.

We have received a budget for hospital equipment supplies, building toilets for disabled people, renovations and painting the building, and health education workshops to promote good health and prevention from disease.

Before we had the Village Hive in our community, we faced some risks because of the lack of health knowledge in the community; now, we have the resources to educate our people to allow them to learn fast and protect themselves.

Before, I could see that even though many people had national social security ID cards and low-income ID cards, they were reluctant to use them in our local health clinic. Now they know and understand that with these two cards, or even if they are poor and don't have these cards, they can still access all of our services.

The Village Hive is encouraging people to use the services from our local health clinic more than before. I see a big change in the increase in the number of people accessing our clinic. I feel so happy to see that the Village Hive really is helping our community.

We are also now doing outreach work in the community to provide general education, health knowledge and home nursing. The Village Hive supports our Village Health Committee group. Every month, we can host meetings and share news from our health clinic to alert our communities to risks so they can get vital information on time.

The support we received from CCT to build our Village Hive is helping to develop our community and health clinic. I want our Village Hive to continue in the long run because it helps us achieve our goals to help our people. My biggest goal is to see the Svay Pao community develop and the people under our protection have good health and a high standard of life.

When they have enough health education, it will help prevent them from living in poverty. When they have good health, they can work and make a living to support their family.

Sincerely,



Meas Sambath
Director of Svay Pao Health Centre



Health Outcomes 2023

Improving clinic infrastructure

In 2023, the village health clinic in Svay Pao was supported to assess their facilities to determine the required infrastructure upgrades. The old clinic building was renovated and painted.

A bathroom with disability access was built. The rainwater drainage that usually floods in the rainy season was fixed, preventing the spread of waterborne infectious diseases.



Improving clinic equipment and supplies

In a co-creation workshop with Svay Pao's Village Health Clinic and Commune Chief, gaps in medical supplies and equipment were identified.

Following the workshop, equipment was purchased or replaced, including blood pressure monitors, easy-touch autoscopes, ophthalmoscopes, ear thermometers, forceps, surgical scissors, and other first-aid equipment and hygiene supplies.



Resourcing and supporting nurses and clinic staff

Svay Pao Village Health Clinic staff were supported to provide training to 25 village health volunteers on clinic services, the role of village health volunteers, identification and referral of families, specific communicable diseases of concern – focusing in particular on dengue fever prevention and treatment and promotion of preventative health measures, including maintaining good hygiene practices.

After village health volunteers completed the training workshops, they conducted awareness-raising activities in the community about the clinic services.

The Svay Pao Health Clinic responded to more than **3,000 cases** from September to November 2023, including **1,336 acute new cases**.





Improving clinic services

We supported the clinic staff and commune leaders to organise four community outreach workshops across all four villages in Svay Pao Commune.

The focus of the workshops was on preventative health, including:

- Combating and preventing the rise in cases of diarrhoea during the rainy season
- Promoting good hygiene practices such as handwashing and safe food preparation

- Raising awareness of clinic services available to the community
- Encouraging residents to use their low-income ID cards to access health services free of charge

A home nursing program was introduced to Svay Pao clinic. In total, 35 families, comprising 152 people, in Svay Pao received home nursing services in 2023. These families were then supported to access public hospitals and specialist healthcare providers as a result of those visits.



Early Intervention in Svay Pao

Svay Pao has adopted CCT's seven-step Early Intervention Journey as their official framework for working with vulnerable children and families.

Embedding this program into the public sector involved transferring social work staff to join the Commune Council for Women and Children (CCWC) team and providing training to the CCWC lead to oversee the program.



We bring you a report from Svay Pao's CCWC Social Work Lead, **Chun Sothy**

One of the main goals of the Village Hive is focused on preventing family separation, helping families to have stable jobs and businesses so that they can make a better living to support their children's education.

Before the Village Hive, we lacked the ability to address the problems our citizens were facing. When they experienced hardship, they didn't come to report it to us so we weren't aware of their struggles.

Since CCT set up the Village Hive, we collaborated and worked together to find the most vulnerable families in the community. We have a Hotline to provide immediate assistance for emergency cases.

Now we have a budget and resources in our hands, it is easy to provide prompt support to help them if they don't have food, or their children don't have school materials.

For some families who don't have jobs, we help them with training and setting up a small business so that they can make a better living. When we support families to connect to employment or establish a business they really have a better quality of life from it. Their children can then go to school and we can close the case and move to help the next family. This is a very good thing.

For homeless people, they don't have secure homes so their standard of living is very poor, so we can support them to have stable homes or even rent a place to ensure they have a better quality of living.

Before, our citizens were reluctant to come to us for support because they didn't have the knowledge or understanding of what their local council could do. NGOs can't adequately be responsible for the kind of support they need.

After we promoted the Village Hive to our citizens, they now understand that when they have a problem they can report it to us or call our Hotline and our team will connect and check in at their home.

Prior to the Village Hive, CCT worked separately. Like other NGOs, they worked alone which makes it very difficult. But now it is much easier because we have our Village Hive budget and our people are engaging directly with us.

The difference between CCT and other NGOs is that CCT has embedded their programs and budget into our Village Hive to empower us to support our own people. Some other NGOs are also working within Svay Pao, but they don't embed their work into our systems.

I can say, CCT's approach and the results we see from the Village Hive is better than other NGOs because we have the ability to reach all our people. For other NGOs, when we see our people need support we need to send a proposal to them to request help. But they have their own agenda and have the right to decline.



That is why the Village Hive is very good because we have a budget and resources that we have control over, so we can take action easily and help our people without delay with healthcare, jobs, and business, or food. It is very good.

If other NGOs worked like CCT, it would be very good because our local council needs to take control of this work and manage the budget and lead the program ourselves. If we need to go back and forth sending proposals to NGOs, it takes so much time and it is impossible to help people on time.

Since the Village Hive, I am now busier than ever, but it is okay for me because I want to help people in my community. So I am happy to be busy. I don't want to see our people living in poverty and having a vulnerable life.

My dream is to see my people in our community to have the essential support they need to have a better quality of life and for the whole community to have a better standard of living.

Sincerely,



Chun Sothy
Commune Council for Women and Children
(CCWC) in Svay Pao Commune



Early Intervention Outcomes 2023

Establishing our Early Intervention Journey in Svay Pao involved transferring two CCT social workers who are experienced in using the seven-step journey to join Svay Pao's social services workforce with the CCWC.

This transfer is a multistage process involving CCT social workers volunteering to step into the new roles and no longer being accountable to CCT, but instead to the Svay Pao community and local council. The social workers are under contract to the Village Hive, are supervised by the CCWC and work out of the commune office.

During 2023, the social workers held **51 cases** of vulnerable families, comprising **232 people**, progressing through various stages of the seven-step journey.

We expect this number to grow temporarily in 2024, as we saw in Ou Char, due to social services being made accessible through the public system to all people in Svay Pao.

One of the first activities the Svay Pao workforce undertook was to host a meeting to inform all residents across the four villages about the Village Hive opening in their community. This ensured families were aware of the services now available to them free of charge.

They encouraged residents to use the Hotline if they or someone they knew needed social support. They also informed families of the after-school care program which operates from within the public school and gave them information regarding services available in their village health clinic.



Twelve additional families, comprising **50 people**, were then referred for social protection support in Svay Pao in 2023. The additional families were mainly referred via the Hotline or CCWC as they were poor, had unstable employment and were unable to provide for their children's basic needs, such as nutrition or education.

Step one of the journey involved social workers conducting home visits to the families to perform a self-assessment of their basic needs. Families were connected to public services in their communities, and support payments were provided to help them meet their basic needs while they transitioned through all seven steps of the journey.

At the end of 2023, a total number of 26 families, comprising 114 people, in Svay Pao were at various steps along the Early Intervention Journey. Twenty-two families received assistance in establishing financial goals.

The families conducted a financial assessment to examine their current income, assets, debt and expenses. This information was then used to calculate the financial goal, specifying what income was required for their family to cover all their expenses and add to savings.

Fifteen of these families have completed financial literacy training and were supported in developing a plan to reach their financial goal.



Svay Pao Case Study

How Svay Pao's Village Hive is already transforming lives

In the village of Svay Pao, life was a daily battle for Socheat, and his wife, Mani, who found themselves navigating deep poverty with three children in tow. Socheat worked at the market, earning a meagre \$5 a day, while Mani stayed home to care for the children.

However, the financial strain made it impossible to afford education for the kids or even meet their basic needs.

The family's situation changed when they began working with the Village Hive in Svay Pao Commune in 2023. One of the first challenges addressed by the Village Hive was the lack of school materials and access to education. The two eldest children, Chin, 9, and Chen, 8, had never been to school before.

Providing school supplies and ensuring they could attend the after-school care program in their local public school was essential. After Chin and Chen enrolled in grade 1 together, Mani gained precious time to focus on work and improving their financial situation



Recognising the need for sustainable income, the family wanted to set up a small restaurant in front of their house. This endeavour provided them with a source of income and empowered them to take control of their future.

The business support offered by the Village Hive included financial literacy training and cash to acquire food and equipment.

Despite living in a cramped two-bedroom house with 12 people, the family's outlook began to change. Soheat expressed his gratitude, saying,

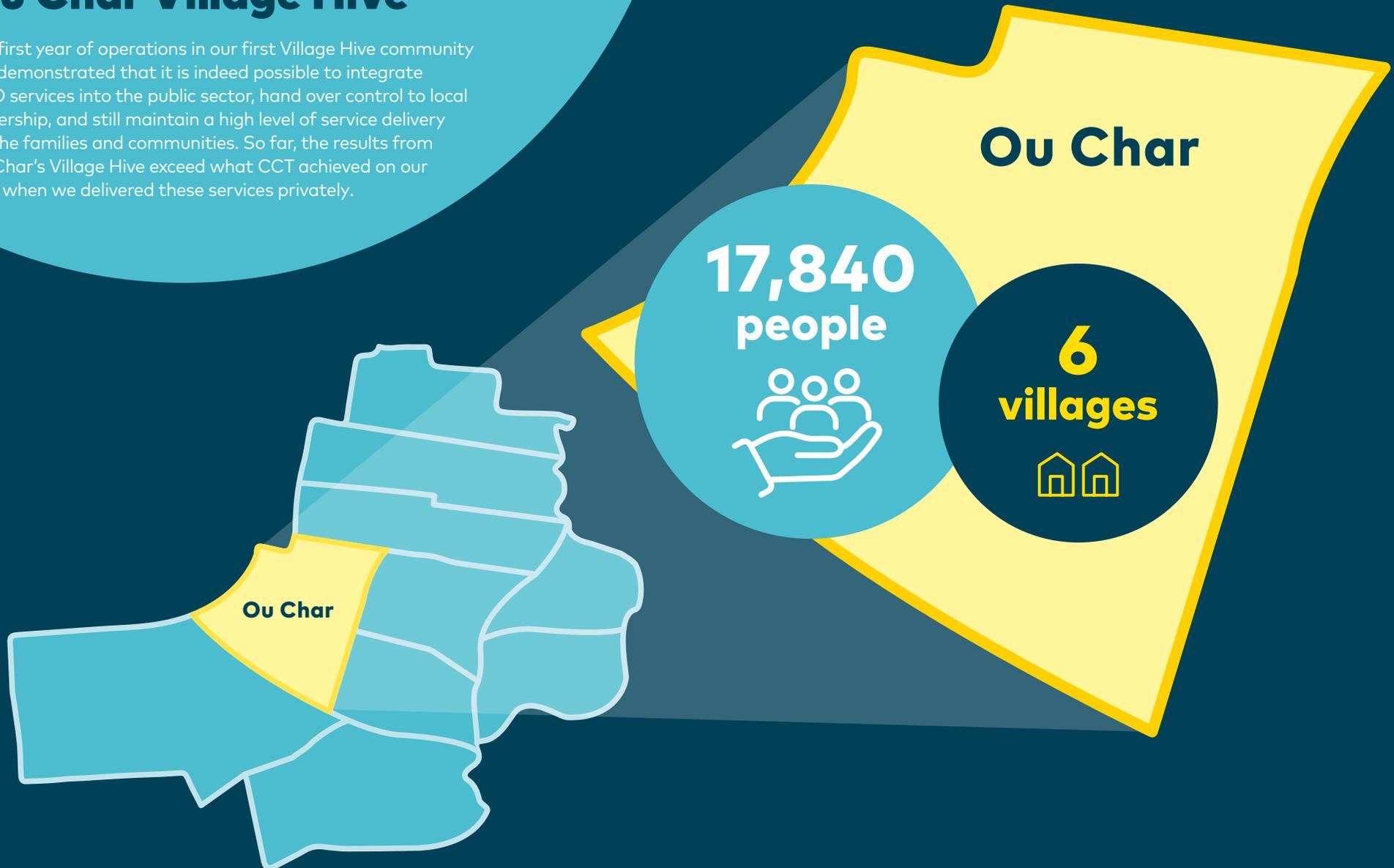
"I was really sad that I couldn't afford to send my children to school. I just wanted them to be like other kids. I felt so happy when I heard the Village Hive was supporting my family, helping my kids go to school, and supporting us to start a business."

Now that Soheat and Mani are both working full-time, everything has changed. With their kids enrolled in both public school and the Village Hive after-school care program, they have more time to focus on their business. They aspire to relocate to their own house and have ambitions to expand the restaurant venture, potentially hiring additional staff.



Ou Char Village Hive

The first year of operations in our first Village Hive community has demonstrated that it is indeed possible to integrate NGO services into the public sector, hand over control to local leadership, and still maintain a high level of service delivery for the families and communities. So far, the results from Ou Char's Village Hive exceed what CCT achieved on our own when we delivered these services privately.



We bring you a report from Ou Char's Commune Chief, **Em Sophal**

I am very honoured that CCT invited me to share my thoughts about Ou Char Commune's Village Hive.

Our Village Hive is a collaboration between Ou Char and CCT. The formal handover from CCT to Ou Char was in December 2022, but we have worked together hand in hand for quite a long time before that, nearly two years, since October 2020.

I am sure you already know about CCT's mission not to run their programs privately but instead, integrate them into the local public sector so the Ou Char Council can take responsibility and lead our own social services programs.

The Village Hive in Ou Char Commune has one primary social worker who leads the social support services programs. She represents the Commune Council for Women and Children (CCWC). She is leading our Village Hive team. However, when there are high-risk cases, I and other council members join in to help and provide solutions to the cases. The Ou Char Council teams, all Village Chiefs, Police Chiefs, and many more teams are involved and work together for our Village Hive.

We have so much joy and happiness that CCT has provided us with more human resources, funds, and activities to create the Village Hive that supports people in our Ou Char community.

We now have a community centre in our public school that supports children in crisis who lack education. Through that program, we provide support to children who are in need. We currently have **41 children** enrolled in that program.

They come to get an education, and if they are absent, we have Project Officer Mrs Nov Leakena from CCWC, who investigates and assists those children back into the program.

We are on track and preventing every possible risk for those vulnerable children. We find the reasons why they are missing school, and if they face any problem in life or their family, we can now help them resolve it.

If children are falling behind in their studies and cannot catch up to their peers, we have staff who keep track of them and support them in every lesson they need. We now have staff in our public school who help vulnerable children with homework and after-school care until 4 pm when they return to their homes.

The Village Hive is such a huge benefit for our community. As Commune Chief, I am so happy and full-hearted.

I am passionate about giving all my energy and full cooperation to our Village Hive.

We are the Ou Char leaders and are determined to serve our people with all the benefits they deserve.



Recently, we were informed about a family who has HIV and immigrated to Ou Char Commune. The family hid their illness, and so no one knew about their struggle, which made their health worse.

After we heard about their case, our team took the family to the local hospital just in time. Since then, we have helped them with house rent, water and electricity, and school enrolment for their kids at our community public school centre.

This system is essential and has many benefits for our community, especially vulnerable families. Our Village Hive also has a housing program and construction team. This service has been offered to families in our community.

Every family with a problem with their home can report it to us, and we can refer their case to our Village Hive team and help in every way we can.

In some cases, we're spending our council budget, and in some cases, we're spending our Village Hive budget. We've received some emergency cases like the Som Rorn family. One day, their house burnt to the ground, and they became homeless.

After we heard about their case, we used funds from our Village Hive social support service budget plus some funds from our government budget.

We put six trucks of farm soil into their submerged land. Our Village Hive team then built a new house for them.

I want to let you all know that it's because of CCT that we have our Village Hive. We believe our people will surely get as many benefits as they deserve, and we are doing our best to provide as much support as possible.

Without the Village Hive, we wouldn't be able to provide enough support to our people. CCT is trying hard to find more funding to support our Village Hive. They are doing their best, which is a privilege for us that we cannot forget.

I wish for our neighbours in Svay Pao Commune, who have just established their Village Hive, to be as successful as we have been in Ou Char.

The more success we all achieve, with good outcomes for our people, the more prosperity we will have in our communities. It will show international donors that the Village Hive Project is an effective strategy to support our communities. In the years to come, when they see the impact, I am sure we will have more support to keep on working.

I will continue to encourage our Village Hive team to keep up their hard work for our people and communities.

The safety net we provide for our vulnerable children and families means all people in Ou Char can live fairly with the quality of life they deserve.

Sincerely,



Em Sophal
Ou Char Commune Chief



Ou Char Village Hive Impact Report

Since 2007, we have been helping vulnerable children in Battambang District. As CCT grew and developed, we tried our best to reach every vulnerable child in the region.

But despite our best efforts, some of the most vulnerable children or families in the community were still slipping through the cracks. In response, we instituted initiatives which we hoped would prevent any vulnerable child from being overlooked.

We brought in village-based social workers who knew their communities intimately and were better placed to uncover hidden risks. We established Child Protection Networks in the communities whose role was identifying and referring all vulnerable children and families for support.

These measures were effective to varying degrees – we saw an uptick in cases, but ultimately, the whole community was not engaged and we weren't reaching many of the most vulnerable.

This is because many families hesitate to seek support from NGOs for numerous reasons. Some lack trust in NGOs, while others are reluctant to work with them due to negative past experiences.

The stigma of being supported by an NGO in the community is also a deterrent to many families.

Many families lack understanding of how to request support from a NGO. Others state that the lack of an open-door policy, with NGOs mostly recruiting their own beneficiaries, leaves many families feeling unable to ask for support directly.



Since embedding the Village Hive into the public sector and making it easily accessible to all people in Ou Char Commune, we are finally seeing widespread community engagement.

The number of calls made directly to the Village Hive Hotline by the community members reflects the dramatic increase in the reach and engagement of the Village Hive operating through public facilities.

In 2023, the Village Hive in Ou Char saw a 537% increase in the number of calls directly from the community compared to the year prior. 172 calls were made to the Hotline in 2023 from community members advocating for themselves versus 27 calls in 2022.

The Village Hive has also received more calls that are categorised as 'crisis cases'. In 2022, just **3%** of cases were classified as crisis, while **13%** were deemed crisis in 2023. Most of these cases involved child labour, with children working instead of regularly attending school.

In response to the uptick in crisis cases, an additional social worker was transferred to Ou Char from CCT to manage the increased caseload effectively. In 2023, 64 new cases opened and a total of 152 cases were active in Ou Char. 58 cases graduated from the Early Intervention Journey seven-step program and are now self-reliant and able to meet all their needs without welfare support.

We suspect that the cases in Ou Char will be temporarily raised in 2024 while the underlying vulnerability is addressed. After this time, we expect to see a reduction in both early intervention and crisis cases.

Our monitoring and evaluation team will continue to track the progress in Ou Char over the next eight years as we establish a Village Hive in all eight remaining communes in Battambang District. This data will enable us to monitor longitudinal trends and will inform the ongoing development of the Village Hive.

As well as supporting Ou Char leadership with the first year of Village Hive operations, a number of further developments occurred in Ou Char throughout 2023.

An income-generating activity for the public school was established in Ou Char. CCT's youth centre service was transitioned into the school in 2022, becoming a free after-school care service for vulnerable students. In 2023, an income-generating activity for the public schools was created when the schools opened the after-school care service to all students at the school for a small fee.



While the after-school care service is still free for low-income families until they graduate from the Early Intervention Journey, it is proving to be a valuable resource for families with the means to pay.

Even though the cost to access the after-school care service is low at USD 19.50 per month, the schools are delighted to provide a valuable service and generate additional income to support the school and subsidise low-income families.

Ou Char Commune shares its village health clinic with an adjoining commune called Chamkar Samraong. 36,094 people access the clinic for primary healthcare services from 11 villages.

In the first quarter of 2023, the roof of the clinic was strengthened to address leaking in the rainy season.

We supported clinic staff to provide several trainings and workshops to 36 village health volunteers on clinic services, the role of village health volunteers, identification and referral of families, women's health, and outbreaks of infectious diseases in the community.

Following the training and upskilling of the village health volunteers, we supported the clinic staff and commune leader to provide 12 community outreach workshops on preventative health to people in all six villages in Ou Char Commune.



The home nursing program that was established in 2022 in Ou Char assisted 34 families, comprising 184 people, with home healthcare services, and 36 people were supported to access public hospitals and specialist healthcare providers as a result of those visits.

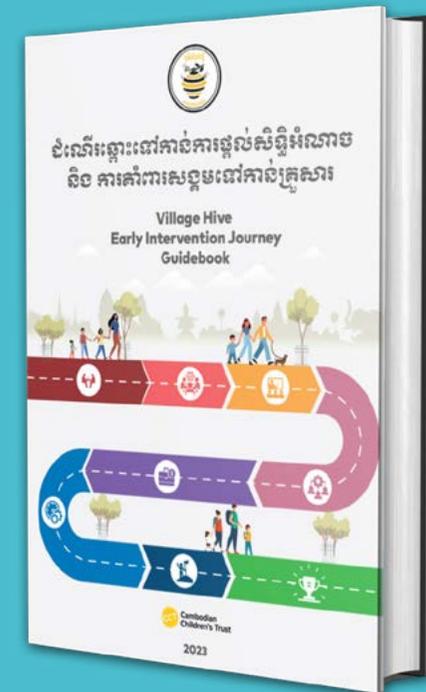
A lesson learned from Ou Char's first year of operations came from the Village Hive workforce. They had been using our Early Intervention Journey and highlighted the need for a guidebook and for the journey to be revised to include a new step.

The six steps in the previous version of the Early Intervention Journey assumed that families would have a rough idea of how much they were earning and spending each month and, therefore, could estimate their shortfall. However, because most families in Ou Char are self-employed and not on salary, they didn't have the data to complete their financial assessment and create a financial goal.

As a result, a new step was added to the journey. The updated seven-step journey now includes a step to enable the family to use a ledger to record their daily income and expenses for one month.

This step has allowed families to create a more accurate financial goal, which avoids complications as they progress through the Early Intervention Journey.

The first publication of the Village Hive Early Intervention Journey Guidebook with the updated seven steps is due to be published early in 2024 and rolled out across all Village Hive communes. An updated edition of the Guidebook will be published each year as the program evolves based on the learnings from all Village Hive communes.



454

(216 girls) students benefited from improved infrastructure in public schools in Ou Char Commune

8

(3 girls) children attended preschool classes at public school in Ou Char Commune

9,083

nutritious meals were served in the public school feeding program

77

children accessed after-school care services from their public school, which included extra curricular life skills and remedial tutoring classes

18

public school teachers were provided with child protection training on managing difficult behaviours

33

new families, comprising 173 people, were referred for early intervention services in Ou Char Commune

54

families, comprising 266 people, received emergency support and were connected to public services in the community

38

families completed a financial assessment and completed the first half of the Early Intervention Journey

51

people attended financial literacy training

27

people participated in the community savings groups

Ou Char Focus Group 2023 Results

Two annual focus groups were conducted with local stakeholders, including Ou Char leadership and participants from the wider Ou Char community, who have directly and indirectly received services and support through the Village Hive. Forty-three participants were asked to reflect on the observations in their community since launching the Village Hive one year ago.

CCT's Director, Pon Jedtha, attended both focus group sessions. He said,

"It was an honour to listen as they talked about their lives and the Village Hive Project. It was evident from their reflections that they were gaining knowledge and changing the way they raised their children and interacted with one another. The community believes that their public services are improving and trust is growing, and as a result, families are asking for help when they need it. All who attended mentioned feeling proud of using public services in their community. They now know about their rights, and their confidence in the Village Hive Project shines through."

Participants stated that despite slower economic growth and inflation, they "know how to save money and are aware of spending on things they don't need" and "have paid their debt". They are also more aware of healthcare services and how to access support from public services in their commune.

They noticed many improvements in their community, including
"improved services from the health centre,"
"good quality education", "the commune provides good services and responds quickly", and the "Village Hive staff provide good service and are helpful".

They commented that the public schools are "clean, have flower gardens, are not allowed to sell energy drinks anymore, and have regular meetings with parents". The health clinic was
"reasonably priced, fast and flexible and now has enough medicine to support the community."

Participants also noted improvements they experienced in their families as a result of the Village Hive, saying, "My kids can go to school, and I have time to work or earn a living", "I've improved my standard of living", "My children helped more with household chores, have life skills and are more engaged to do their homework".

Participants reported an 87% improvement in their family's situation due to the Village Hive.

In the future, participants want the Village Hive to "continue to provide school materials for children", "would like a resident doctor at the health clinic", "want a waiting room at the health clinic", "want the NGO school in the commune to be like the Village Hive public schools and stop requiring children to pay for certain classes", "want the schools to provide English classes", "want the commune to continue to provide support for families", and "want to understand how to create a more prosperous business".

Village Hive leaders stated that they had more confidence to deliver services to the community as they had a clear plan and regular meetings, were working effectively together as a team, received technical support when required, had clear policies, budgets and guidelines and could see the benefits for children and families in their community.

However, the most significant change is the way that local leaders want to interact with NGOs, requesting that projects be "handed over to local leaders rather than NGO lead" and "would like to see other organisations doing activities or projects like the Village Hive that are implemented in the local community".

They have noticed many changes in the community, such as "families engage with teachers and schools", "parents set a good example for their children", "parents encourage children to go to school regularly", "families get jobs and vocational training skills", "violence is greatly reduced", "the family has the authority to decide their own affairs", "families understand the services they can receive", "families have stable jobs and income and migration is prevented", "every child can access education", and "alcohol consumption has reduced".

When asked why the number of families accessing services from the Village Hive has increased, they stated, "Families share information with their neighbours", "there is promotion of the Village Hive in the community", "there is increased trust in the community", "the commune has public services and clear solutions are provided to families" and "the Village Hive helps improve the standard of living".

Local leaders stated that there was an 81% improvement in public services in their community since the implementation of the Village Hive.



When asked what improvements they want their Village Hive to focus on in 2024, participants stated they wanted:

"More health education workshops in the villages"

"More funding for Village Hive implementation to meet current needs"

"To see the family continue to have a better standard of living and having the ability to solve problems on their own"

"To see other organisations doing activities or projects like CCT and the Village Hive that is implemented in the local community"

"More local volunteer teachers for children who are in need"

"An after-school care program in all schools"

"A wheelchair for the elderly patients at the health clinic"

"To develop their knowledge of the Village Hive and promote the Village Hive services in their community."

The insights from the focus group go beyond merely offering valuable information to CCT to drive the growth and evolution of the Village Hive. They also provide value to the local stakeholders to implement the feedback and findings in their community.

Based on focus group discussions held with the public schools, commune council, and the local community in 2023, the public primary schools in Ou Char Commune and the Department of Education developed a work plan to continue improving the schools' facilities. Some activities were funded from the school budget, and additional funds were raised in the community.

This demonstrates the importance the Ou Char community places on their children's education and that the community can be mobilised to fund its own development as a result of the operational guidance provided through the Village Hive Project.





Ou Char Stories & Case Studies

Sreyta's income soars from \$6 to \$50

Amid the global pandemic in 2020, Sreyta encountered significant challenges. Struggling to provide food for her children, facing obstacles in sending them to school, and having her electricity and water services cut off, she persevered through these hardships with resilience. She maintained a positive outlook, determined to forge ahead.

Sreyta worked at the local market, selling fruit and vegetables. Despite a complete absence of customers due to widespread isolation, she showed up at work every day. We asked Sreyta how she got through the pandemic without customers or income. She shared, "When I think back to those hard times, sometimes I would look at the sky and wonder why I was struggling so much. But still, I had to keep walking. Even when my life was so difficult, I kept going. If I fall, I get up, and I keep walking."

Not only did Sreyta keep walking, but she also established a thriving small business selling second-hand clothes after partnering with the Village Hive.

Her daily earnings have sky-rocketed from \$6 in 2020 to \$50 in 2023. As a result, she can now meet her family's needs, including food, bills, and healthcare, while independently ensuring her children's education.

Sreyta says she thinks she would have died without CCT's assistance during the pandemic. But now things have changed. "Because I work hard and have CCT supporting me, my life is just getting better and better!"



Makara's unwavering determination to bring her child home

Makara, a devoted mother of three, did everything possible to keep her children close. But juggling work demands, health issues, and her children's education as a single parent was challenging. "I remember there was one time that both my children were sick," Makara shared.

"One had dengue fever, and the other had the flu. It was so stressful because I didn't have any money. But I'm lucky. I had my mum and brother to help me. If I didn't have them, I think my children would have died."

Struggling to manage everything independently, she had to send her oldest son to live with her mum, who was also grappling with financial challenges. After meeting the Village Hive team, Makara expressed that her top priority was bringing her son home. Social workers co-created a plan to help Makara establish a successful business that would allow her to cover her family's expenses. "CCT helped me to buy a sugar cane machine, a cart and a freezer. When I got the sugar cane machine, I was so happy. Before, I had no hope. But after starting the business, I felt so relieved."

Shortly after establishing her business, Makara felt ready to bring her son home. "Now that I'm selling the sugar cane juice, I have more time, and my children live with me."

The money that I get from the sugar cane goes towards my children. It means they can go to school and buy food. If I have anything left over, I invest in my business to earn more money."

Now that her family is back together, Makara's joy comes from the simplest pleasures. From saying, "It's time to go to school," to calling out, "It's time to take a bath," Makara cherishes the little moments with her children that make life meaningful.



How community-centric healthcare transformed Sothea's journey with HIV

After Village Hive social workers in Ou Char came across the story of a woman grappling with the harsh reality of an HIV diagnosis, we encountered Sothea. Her experience stands as evidence of the profound impact of community-centric healthcare.

Sothea felt frightened when confronting the impact of her diagnosis while in hospital. Her family's financial situation intensified her struggles, and she felt compelled to run away from the hospital to provide for her mother and young son. "The doctor asked why I was leaving if I was still so sick," she recounted. "He removed my IV drip as I told him I needed to go and earn money. I'd return to the hospital once I'd made enough money. It kept going like that for so long."

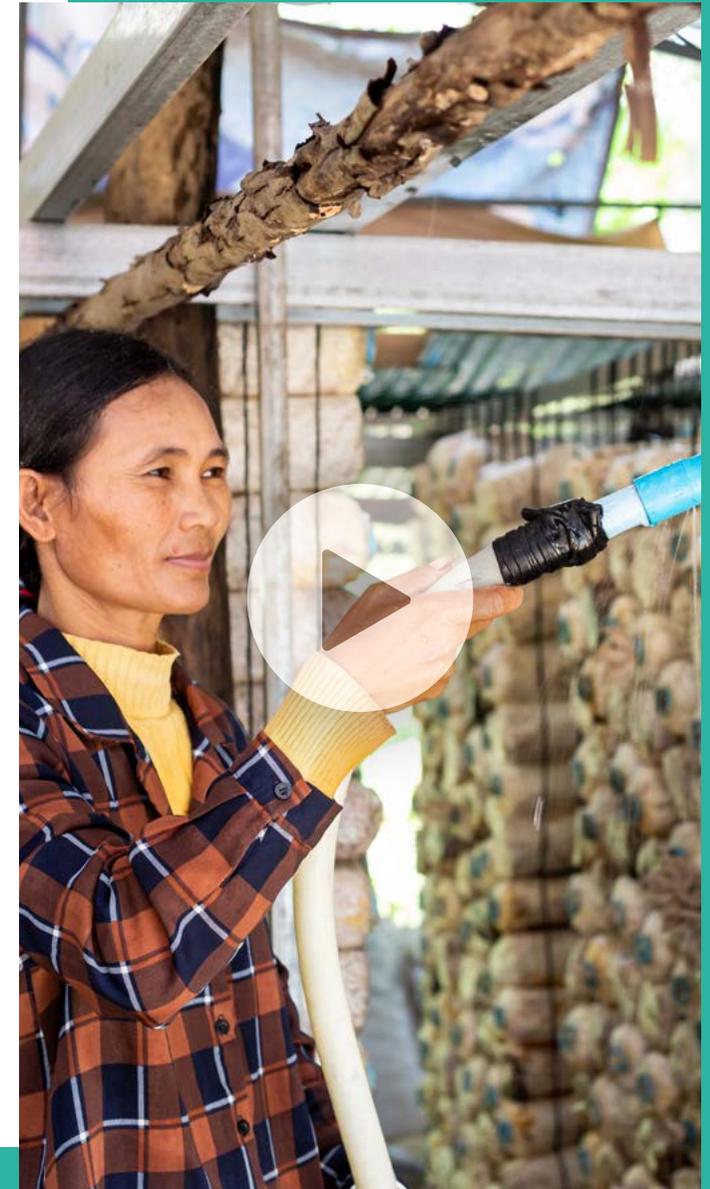
Sothea's intervention unfolded with a strategy that included emergency health care and income generation activities. Sothea was connected to free services at her local health clinic in Ou Char Commune, where she received proper treatment and medication for her HIV diagnosis. Previously unable to afford the necessary medication, her health had been declining. But she soon experienced a marked improvement from accessing the public system.

"This is why our Village Hive model strengthens and improves public health clinics," social worker Malika said.

"It's so important that vulnerable people like Sothea can access free quality health care from within their own communities. Access to healthcare changes everything."

Sothea also received a monthly support payment of US\$50 for eight months, offering a lifeline during a critical period. Beyond financial support, she was assisted in launching a mushroom farm equipped with 300 grow bags and all necessary farming equipment. This allowed her to transition from earning \$5 – \$7 a day to generating over \$20 a day.

After establishing her own business, Sothea implemented a savings plan. Soon, she no longer required any welfare support payments as she cared for her mother and son independently. The success story of Sothea, facilitated by the Village Hive, demonstrates how strengthened healthcare systems, combined with targeted economic empowerment, can uplift individuals from the depths of hardship to a secure and stable future.



Village Hive support shapes a new future for Poug and her children

The reality of poverty means parents often feel they have no choice but to make the heart-wrenching decision of leaving their children in pursuit of employment. This was a situation single mum Poug found herself in. "If I didn't leave to go to work, we wouldn't have been able to eat," she shared.

"I couldn't take my children with me. So I had to leave them with my mum. But when I got to the new job, they never paid me. I didn't have a salary for 4-5 months. So I left the job and returned with nothing. It was so difficult, and I didn't have a home. My children didn't have enough. I felt so bad for them."

Poug would hug her children to sleep at night and cry as she wondered why she couldn't give them a better life. When they were unwell, she was unable to take them to the hospital. Even if medical treatment was available at no cost, the financial strain of transportation and the necessity to purchase food and water during overnight stays was too challenging.

The turning point came when a compassionate neighbour alerted the Village Hive about her family's circumstances.

The Village Hive team co-created a strategy to assist Poug, encompassing income generation through a new business, educational support for her children (including books, uniforms, shoes, and bicycles), provisions of food supplies, a renovation of her house, and the provision of a motorbike.

This support altered Poug's life, inspiring her to persevere and shape a new future for her children.

"Now that I have my own motorbike, I can take my children to school by myself. After I take my children to school, I go to work. I have a beautiful new house and a new bathroom. I'm so happy."



Mao's journey from struggling to afford water to saving \$400 per month

Mao, a new mother, was unable to afford basic necessities like food or water after giving birth. She was staying in a hospital when she faced the stark reality of having two kids while living in deep poverty. "I looked at the people around me; they all had food, but I had nothing. I felt so sad," she shared.

Mao was also struggling to send her daughter, Lyza, to school. She couldn't afford school materials, and Lyza fell behind her peers. Mao remembered a moment when Lyza returned home, asking if she could quit school and start work to help the family. Mao firmly responded, "No. Even though we're poor, you have to study. You must get an education so you're not illiterate like me."

Mao was fed up and knew she needed to take control of her family's life. She visited the commune office in Ou Char Commune, seeking assistance. The Village Hive team responded by organising a financial assessment and literacy training session. Following the training, a collaborative effort led to the creation of a business plan. Today, Mao sells fruit and vegetables at her local market, and she consistently saves between \$13 and \$14 daily. "I can't believe I have the opportunity to start my own business. I feel so happy that it makes me cry."

Thriving at public school, Lyza shared, "Since the Village Hive helped my mum start her own business, we have enough money to pay for my schooling. Our lives are a lot better than before."



How a widowed mother's business led to daughter's thriving education

Ratana found herself at a crossroads when her husband passed away, leaving her as the sole provider for her family. The emotional toll of the loss, coupled with the physical demands of caring for her ageing mother, who frequently experienced falls, created a sense of hopelessness. Ratana struggled to make ends meet, unable to afford basic necessities and facing the daunting challenge of providing for her children's education.

"I didn't know what to do. I didn't have money to pay our bills or send my children to school," shared Ratana. "I went to the Ou Char commune office. Before that, I had no idea the local council could help me."

The collaboration between Ratana and the Village Hive in Ou Char aimed to assist her in establishing income-generation activities to ensure she could support her family independently.

After completing financial literacy training, Ratana co-created a business plan for launching a small restaurant and food stall. Before long, Ratana witnessed a considerable increase in her daily income.

Reaksmeay, Ratana's 14-year-old daughter, attested to the positive impact of working with the Village Hive, stating, "My family's situation has improved a lot. My mum has her own business, and my school results are better because now I have school materials, clothes and enough food."



Landmine explosion survivor empowered to lift entire family out of poverty

"I'm disabled. I got injured by a landmine when I was young, which damaged my hands, legs and eyes. Life hasn't been easy since then. I was sad and didn't know what to do. There was nothing I could do. I just had to accept that I couldn't have a good life like others.

I am a flower farmer. I'm the breadwinner for my family. My two siblings and nephew are all my responsibility. Before my two siblings became ill, our situation wasn't so bad. They were both working, and even though we had low salaries, we were okay. But after they fell ill, all responsibility fell onto me. I grew flowers to care for my family while working from home. I've been working with Ou Char Village Hive for the last eight months. They've helped me to change my mindset.

Now, I can work to earn a better living so we can have a better future. They've also ensured my nephew can access his local public school. And all the education fees were covered.

Now, my nephew is going to after-school care, and I don't have to worry if he's safe because the teachers look after him very well. And now I have time to work while he's getting extra education.

They have also taught me to manage my money, start saving, and stop wasting money on unnecessary things.

Now, I can make \$25 a day from selling flowers. My life is so much easier than before." – Kunthea.







Village Hive District Crisis Services

A well-functioning social protection system should prevent most people from ending up in crisis.

However, a small percentage of crises will inevitably occur in any community. For this reason, crisis response services play an essential role in a social protection system to ameliorate harm and minimise the long-term impacts of trauma.

In Cambodia, social protection cases (those without safety risks) are managed at a commune level, while child protection cases (those with safety risks) are managed at a district level. The social protection cases managed at the commune level are the primary focus of the Village Hive Project. However, handing over child protection cases to be managed at the district level also forms a crucial part of our Village Hive Project and exit strategy.

Service Delivery Levels for Social Protection and Child Protection in Battambang District



Child Protection

In 2023, we strengthened the Battambang District's ability to respond to crises in the community, including domestic violence, abuse, exploitation, family separation/institutionalisation, and trafficking, by transferring four senior CCT social workers to join Battambang District's public workforce. These four social workers now work from the Public Social Affairs Welfare Office (SASWO) and assist with complex cases across all ten communes in Battambang District.

The extra human resources have increased SASWO's capacity to identify and respond to child protection cases, ensuring the operational sustainability of child protection work in Battambang District.

Senior social workers use a strengths-based, family-driven approach to casework called Signs of Safety. They promote self-determination by partnering with families to cultivate a lasting network of support from trusted relatives, neighbours, and friends.

Families are assisted in developing safety plans to overcome the challenges in their lives and ensure the ongoing safety and well-being of their children.

By building strong relationships, social workers, families, their extended network of kin and local leaders work together to ensure children's safety, stability, and healthy development.

4

additional social workers have joined the public social services workforce

121

active child protection cases are being managed

46

new child protection cases were referred for case management in 2023

Emergency Hotline

In 2023, we continued to operate the only child protection Hotline in Battambang. The Hotline worked 24/7 to provide an immediate response to 344 calls, assisting 1,182 people at risk. It is a confidential service, allowing community members to raise child protection concerns. Immediate emergency support provided by the Hotline staff ensures children in the community are safe.

In 2023, we saw a 28% increase in calls to the Hotline due to Village Hive social services now being more accessible to vulnerable families via public facilities. 50% of the calls were from Ou Char Commune, 15% from Svay Pao Commune, and 35% were from the remaining communes in Battambang District. In 2022, only 10% were from Ou Char Commune and 7% from Svay Pao, demonstrating the difference in community engagement after establishing the Village Hive.





SKO orphanage survivor reunites with family

After Dyna's parents went through a divorce when he was just seven years old, his mother and older sister relocated to Thailand. Remaining in the care of his financially strained father, Dyna didn't have the resources or money to attend school. Consequently, his father, believing it to be the best option, made the decision to place Dyna in an orphanage.

Dyna spent his years in SKO orphanage, the same facility that, in 2007, Pon Jedtha and Tara Winkler rescued fourteen children from. Reflecting on his time in the orphanage, Dyna shared, "It was difficult living away from my family and my father. I felt scared being away from home."

"I thought the orphanage would be a good place and that I would get to go to school. But at the orphanage I experienced bullying, didn't have enough food to eat and was forced to work."

The orphanage proved to be far from an ideal environment. The mistreatment reached a devastating point when, during a play session, Dyna suffered a fall resulting in a broken leg.

The orphanage staff took him to the hospital but ended up abandoning him there for several weeks, refusing to cover his medical expenses. The lack of medical care led to a severe infection and an heartbreaking ordeal that no child should ever have to endure. "The wound became infected as there was no one caring for it. It became so infected that my leg had to get amputated," Dyna recounted.

Dyna was eventually brought back to SKO orphanage, where he resided until its closure in 2020. Following this, CCT took the initiative to assist Dyna in transitioning to independent living, providing support for rent, food, bills, and other living expenses. Under the guidance of CCT, Dyna accessed vocational training to become a phone repair technician. Since completing the training, his aspiration is to establish his own phone repair shop.

Dyna's mother and older sister had been residing and working in Thailand since their separation from Dyna after the divorce. Despite their desire to return to Cambodia, they hesitated due to their stable jobs in Thailand. They were working toward a financial goal to facilitate their return, but their plans were disrupted when Dyna's mother was diagnosed with cancer. The family spent their savings on her chemotherapy and surgery.

In September 2023, after extensive coordination between CCT social workers and Dyna's mother and sister, they finally left Thailand to reunite with Dyna in Cambodia. Although they had family land in Cambodia, there was no house. To address this, CCT stepped in to help construct a home where the reunited family could live together.

Reuniting with his family has brought about a transformative change in Dyna's life. Most significantly, there has been a remarkable improvement in his mental health. Reflecting on the past, Dyna expressed, "When I was alone, I felt very depressed. I felt lonely. I didn't care about anything. I had no energy to wake up and keep going. I missed my family and I wanted to live with them," he shared.

"But now that I'm back with my family, I am motivated. I have more energy. I am enthusiastic about life. I used to dream about seeing my mum and now I can see her, touch her and hug her."

Equally happy about the reunion is Dyna's mother. During her time overseas, she grappled with daily worry about Dyna. However, constrained by financial limitations, she felt unable to return home. She expressed her relief, saying, "Now, my stress has significantly reduced. I no longer need to worry about my son, and I can be with him forever."



Foster Care and Kinship Care

Several meetings were held throughout the year by the National Ministry for Social Affairs Veterans and Youth (MoSVY) to finalise Cambodia's foster care and kinship care policy, including recruitment and training of foster carers in the community. CCT's leadership team contributed to the new policy by sharing the learnings from the Village Hive and our foster care program.

CCT's foster care homes, which were set up after closing the orphanage in 2012, housed 16 children and youth in 2023. Three youths, aged 17, 24 and 26, transitioned out of foster care into independent living in 2023.

CCT is assisting them in pursuing their studies and vocational training. Three siblings, aged between 14 - 17, transitioned into kinship care, living with their older sister. CCT supports the children and their sister with their ongoing education, housing and support payments. These transitions meant one foster care house was closed in 2023, with no new short-term foster care placements required during the year.



6

children and youths transitioned from foster care into kinship care or their family of origin

10

children and youth in 4 foster care homes were supported to move towards permanency

Children and youth in kinship care are invited to join CCT's Care Leaver Network, ensuring they are supported during the transition from alternative care to family-based care or independence. Therapeutic counselling services are provided to children to lessen the impact of trauma.

22

children and youths were provided with ongoing support in family-based care, kinship care or independent living after leaving institutional care

32

children and youth who were reintegrated from institutional care into community care have achieved independence and no longer require support

Siblings inspiring transition from an orphanage to independent living

At sixteen, Vanna is an orphanage survivor and a valued member of CCT's Care Leaver Network. Vanna, along with her three siblings, Chanra (14), Samart (20), and Hanna (21), lost both of their parents in 2020. Today, CCT supports them as they embrace independent living together as a family.

"Growing up, I was happy living with my parents," says Vanna. "They took good care of me and loved me very much. Even though we didn't have much money, they ensured I had everything I needed."

One day, Vanna's parents told her that they couldn't afford to raise her and her siblings anymore and that they were taking them to an orphanage. Vanna remembers the heartbreaking moment she watched her parents drive away from the orphanage. "I felt that my parents abandoned me and left me to live with strangers. I thought they didn't love me anymore. All my siblings cried, and we hugged each other."

She quickly realised life at the orphanage wouldn't be easy. Vanna and her siblings were put to work, cleaning, hand washing clothes, clearing trash and feeding the animals. "I never got enough sleep because I had to wake up at 4 am. If I didn't, the orphanage nanny would pinch and hit me. She would threaten me so I wouldn't scream."

While at the orphanage, Vanna missed her parents more than anything. She waited for their return and held onto hope of their reunion. "During Khmer New Year, my father came to see us and wanted to take us out for the day. But the orphanage staff told him that he couldn't take us. No words could explain my excitement when I saw my father. I cried so much. I couldn't speak, so I just hugged him."

After a few years of living in the orphanage, Vanna's father was permitted to bring her back to her hometown for a short visit. However, Vanna ran away when the orphanage staff came to collect her. When they eventually located her, they asked, "Why don't you want to return? It's a happy place." Vanna responded, "Happy? You abuse me every day." Eventually, the orphanage gave up on bringing Vanna back and let her live with her father.



Chanra, 14 (left), Hanna, 21 (middle) and Vanna, 16 (right)



CCT met Vanna and her family a few months later, in 2017, after they were referred for support by the local authorities. Sadly, three years later, both of Vanna's parents passed away, leading to her relocation into CCT foster care with Chanra and Samart. Meanwhile, her eldest sister, Hanna, resided in an orphanage and was reluctant to leave as she had been promised the opportunity to study overseas.

CCT's social workers continued to visit Hanna in the orphanage with the long-term plan to reunify her with her siblings. In December 2022, Hanna decided to leave the orphanage, realising that the promised educational opportunities abroad were unlikely to materialise. In February 2023, CCT social workers supported Hanna to leave the orphanage and move into independent living.

One month later, Vanna and her younger sister, Chanra, achieved a significant milestone as they transitioned from foster care to independent living, joining Hanna. The three sisters are now supported to live independently in the community, with CCT renting a home for them and providing a monthly support payment. CCT is also supporting Hanna to attend university. Meanwhile, their brother, Samart, is living in Siem Reap and completing vocational training in hospitality.

"CCT is helping me a lot, including my study materials and food. When I go to school, someone will bring me there. I feel safe living here. I can go to the doctor for a check-up when I get sick. I get support from a social worker and no longer live apart from my family," says Vanna.

The siblings are active members of CCT's Care Leaver Network. The purpose of the network is to provide support, encouragement, mentoring and counselling to young people in Battambang Province who have grown up in an orphanage. Through the network, they have learnt that their experiences in the orphanage are not uncommon. Today, Vanna uses her experience to raise awareness about the harms of orphanages and advocate for family-based care.

Vanna believes every child should have the opportunity to grow up in their family and firmly believes that orphanages will harm all children. "I think that our country and the world shouldn't have orphanages because they restrict freedom and abuse children. The most important thing to know is that only the family can truly support a child," she says.

Care Leaver Network

The Care Leaver Network ensures care leavers' voices, experiences and perspectives are incorporated into awareness-raising campaigns for care reform at the community, sub-national and national levels.

The Care Leaver Network created 12 community awareness campaigns in 2023 to promote the network to other care leavers and to encourage social and behavioural change to prevent unnecessary institutionalisation.



6

engagement sessions were held with orphanages, informing 81 children and youth in care about their rights and the support available to them in the community

12

community awareness campaigns were conducted by care leavers on the harms of residential care, reaching 311 participants

32

care leaver group meetings and trainings were conducted, with 103 participants attending

Challenges & Opportunities in 2023

A national election in 2023 occupied the time of the local leaders in Svay Pao while we were rolling out the second Village Hive. This is the second election we have experienced while rolling out the Village Hive. The election created some delays in rollout but otherwise didn't present a threat to the project. This demonstrates the widespread support of the Village Hive from all levels of leadership and the wider community.

At a national level, the election gave rise to a renewed commitment to strengthening social protection systems at a commune level across Cambodia. The minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Chea Somethy, affirmed the government's dedication to strengthening social protection throughout the country.

The ministry also committed to working collaboratively with local stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the government's new policies.

Cambodia's government, under the guidance of the new Prime Minister Hun Manet, has prioritised the National Social Assistance Program as a crucial policy to support families and respond to emergencies. With substantial financial investments and a commitment to leaving no one behind, the government seeks to ensure the well-being of Cambodian citizens. By implementing and strengthening social protection systems, the government aims to guarantee long-term benefits and support for its people.

For these reasons, the National Advisor to MoSVY has shown keen interest in the Village Hive and conducted two site visits to observe and evaluate the project. He discussed the potential for scaling the Village Hive beyond Battambang. A larger delegation from MoSVY is planning a visit to Battambang in 2024.

Another challenge in 2023 arose due to funding shortfalls. To ensure families in Village Hive communities were not impacted, we took action to reduce CCT's headcount by 24%.

This was a very challenging process and has meant we no longer provide direct services across the whole Battambang Province while rolling out the Village Hive. Each year, we will continue to expand the Village Hive across Battambang District.

Eventually, these communes will have a social protection system far superior to the direct services we were providing.

The silver lining from these cutbacks is that they've allowed us to focus our attention and resources on the Village Hive Project, which, in time, will produce a far more significant impact for all communities across Battambang.



Evidence-Base for the Village Hive Project

The evidence base for the Village Hive continues to grow.

In 2023, Dr Freda Hui Truscott from the University of Wollongong travelled to Battambang to conduct research on the Village Hive and will publish the findings in 2024. Various stakeholders were interviewed, including social workers and support staff, local leaders, government staff, community members and donors.

The research paper is titled "Putting Power in the Hands of local communities: Evaluating the effectiveness of community-led social protection systems in Cambodia."

The information gathered from the research will be presented in a report and published in academic journals. These publications will describe the experiences participants have with the existing social protection services provided in Cambodia. This research directly benefits the Ou Char Commune by providing detailed procedures for the localisation of social protection services and explaining what constitutes a local actor in implementing social protection programs, which is also beneficial for the Cambodian Government.

The project's expected outcomes will formulate a detailed financial model that identifies the cost structure of localising international development agencies' services and demonstrate ways to direct funding to local communities.

This research will provide information that could help make decisions to advance the accountability and transparency of international development organisations in the localisation of social protection services.

This study will also assist CCT in improving its financial reporting system, which can be adopted by other international development agencies around the world for localisation and could act as a mechanism to discharge accountability to donors, gain their trust and increase long-term financial contributions.

Dr Bhanu Bhatia from Charles Darwin University has completed the Village Hive evaluation questionnaire and submitted the project for ethics approval. This research project will evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and scalability of community-led social protection systems and provide a longitudinal analysis of the Village Hive's impact on communities.

The research will focus on family relationships, socioeconomic environments, household challenges, social services available in the community, childcare, social capital, the development and well-being of children, and attitudes to residential care.

The original survey was conducted in 36 villages and analysed in 2017. It will provide the baseline data for the research. A control commune with similar socioeconomic variables but without a Village Hive embedded will be used for comparison purposes. The findings will inform the Theory of Change for the Village Hive and will be presented to the Cambodian Government, donors and the international development community.

The research conducted throughout 2023 builds upon Dr Freya Higgins-Desbiolles's research conducted in 2022. Dr Higgins-Desbiolles from the University of South Australia published an academic paper on "Decolonising tourism and development: From orphanage tourism to community empowerment in Cambodia." This paper used CCT as a case study in sustainable development.



2024 and Beyond

Before 2023, we weren't sure how long it would take to roll out a Village Hive in each of the ten communes in Battambang District. The first Village Hive in Ou Char Commune took us several years to complete. We had no roadmap and were 'building the car while driving it'. We also had a pandemic during the rollout, which extended the timelines.

The achievements in Svay Pao in 2023 have shown us that it is possible to establish one Village Hive per commune per year. This has allowed us to firm up the details of our vision and mission to create our own redundancy by establishing a Village Hive in all ten communes in Battambang District. Focusing the Village Hive project in one district means we will have a model that can be replicated and scaled, district by district, providing an evidence base for upstream social protection systems.

As of 2023, we have two operational Village Hives in two communes (10 villages). We are always grateful to CCT supporters who've donated to make this possible. With enough support and enthusiasm from local leadership and our CCT supporters, we are confident we will see a Village Hive operating in all ten communes by 2032.

After 2032, we will continue to collect data and research to present a robust evidence base for the national scale of the Village Hive, but the role CCT has been playing for the last 16 years will no longer be required.

From 2032 onwards, the local Battambang community will be the stewards of their own development and social protection.

8 Years to our redundancy:
10 Communes,
62 Villages,
with a Village Hive by **2032.**



Advocacy & Awareness Raising

We are striving to raise critical awareness about paternalistic systems in international development.



Drops of Wisdom

One of the biggest obstacles we face with our Village Hive Project is the lack of trust that international (primarily institutional) donors have in Cambodian people's ability to lead their own development. This is driven by a pervasive stereotype that Cambodians lack the skills required to develop their communities and are too corrupt to be trusted to manage their own affairs.

These stereotypes lead the international development sector to control community development by privatising social services. Retaining paternalistic control of a foreign country's social protection is not empowering or sustainable.

Shifting the power back to local communities requires cultivating global networks of radical trust and openness to welcome local people to rise to the challenge of transforming their own world.

In 2023, we set off on a mission to use art as a vehicle to challenge societal norms and cultivate radical trust. We launched a project called Drops of Wisdom, a short video series showcasing the intelligence, expertise and wisdom of visionary leaders across Cambodia to counteract limiting stereotypes. With support from Martin James Foundation, CCT's videographer, Chamnan Prak, filmed 17 talks from thought leaders across Cambodia on topics ranging from 'changing

the paradigm in international development' to 'building bridges in a divided world'. The short talks are as heartwarming as they are provocative. All speakers expressed their passion for being involved in a project that was challenging widely held stereotypes which we captured in a behind the scenes 'conversations' video.

In collaboration with Tate-exhibited cross-disciplinary artist, Sally Reynolds, we aim to exhibit the Drops of Wisdom series in 2024 to encourage the public to shift their views on how best to help people in countries like Cambodia and engage with international charity differently.



Talks, conferences and publications



Tara Winkler at the VIVID Ideas Sydney Event



Sinet Chan at the Global Care Leaver Council conference in Africa

Tara Winkler was a panelist at the VIVID Ideas Sydney event. The topic was Natural Footsteps: Ethical Travel. Tara talked about the similarities between the tourism and international development sectors, highlighting how both sectors claim to develop the Global South in ways that aren't effective or sustainable.

The talk was then featured on ABC radio Big Ideas: abc.net.au/listen/programs/bigideas/bri-lee-ben-groundwater-anthony-ham-travel-ethics-vivid/102508576

Tara was also interviewed on the Empowering Leadership Podcast, where she discussed the Orphanage Crisis and how power, privilege, and oppression intersect with charity work.

Sinet Chan was the Southeast Asia representative at the Global Care Leaver Council conference in Africa in May 2023. The Care Leaders Council is a global group of care-experienced advocates from across the world championing the rights of care-experienced people and children without parental care. The Council does this through research, training, policy advocacy, and socio-economic empowerment of care leavers.

The Council works in partnership with diverse stakeholders, including institutional donors, civil society organisations, and care-experienced networks worldwide, to be champions of alternative family-based care.

Sinet Chan, along with Senior Social Workers Nuo Dalin and Pat Tho, were involved in a project to produce the 'Residential Care Transition Messaging: Guidelines on Communicating with Children and Young People in Care,' which includes recommendations from care experienced persons.

It is a set of guidelines to assist practitioners in developing child and youth-friendly communications on transition and closure.



Jaan Bai Social Enterprise Restaurant



Jaan Bai Social Enterprise Restaurant

Jaan Bai, meaning "rice bowl" in Khmer, is a social enterprise initiative of CCT. The restaurant employs Cambodian youth, who benefit from a profit-share arrangement; 51% of profits support CCT's Village Hive.

Jaan Bai was established in 2013 and celebrated ten years of operations in 2023, thanks to the generous support of Vittoria Coffee. The menu showcases the simplicity of well-crafted and nourishing traditional Khmer cuisine.

It employs 20 Cambodian staff who also own a share of the business. Tourism in Cambodia declined significantly from March 2020 due to COVID-19 and only started to recover in the second half of 2022.

In 2023, Jaan Bai increased its revenue by 92% from the previous year and returned a profit of 12%, which equated to over \$ USD 20,000.

In 2023, Battambang was listed under UNESCO's Gastronomy Cities. Jaan Bai was mentioned in The Guardian article, 'How a sleepy town in Cambodia won a place on UNESCO'S culinary map,' as a stylish bistro and bar.



Networks & Partnerships



We don't believe in recreating wheels or duplicating resources.

By harnessing the power of collaborative networks and partnerships, we share our challenges and expertise and utilise the invaluable learnings of others. CCT is implementing partners of the following networks:



Vittoria Coffee



The Upside



Basaid



Martin James FOUNDATION

Martin James Foundation

The Brown Family Foundation



CCTA



World Childhood Foundation



The Hope Effect



Texel Foundation



Family Care First (FCF)



UNICEF



USAID



3PC Alliance

87

workshops / meetings with partner NGOs working in social and child protection

28

meetings with Civil Society Organisations, NGOs and other government departments, such as the Ministry of Health and the Department of Education

The CCT Team



We are grateful for the dedication and commitment of the passionate team at CCT



Social Workers – 27

Youth Centre – 27

Finance & Administration – 12

Leadership – 4

Communication & Advocacy – 4

Human Resources – 2

Housing Services – 3

Family Finance – 2

Research Monitoring & Evaluation – 2



Khmer national
staff



Female
staff

CCT Board of Directors in Cambodia

The CCT Board of Directors is responsible for the governance of CCT, including oversight of the organisation, strategic planning, approval of policies, and ensuring the financial viability of CCT.

1. **Dr Meas Nee (Chairman)**
2. **Pon Jedtha**
3. **Chan Sinet**
4. **Tara Winkler**
5. **Ros Chor Vivorn**

The Village Hive Team



The Village Hive Team

In previous years, we have only represented the staff employed by CCT in our annual report.

However, the Village Hive project is a partnership between CCT, the local commune council, government social service providers, educators and health care practitioners.

As we transfer our staff to the commune, they cease being CCT employees and instead belong to the public workforce. The transfer of human resources from CCT shifts power to the public system to lead and govern their own development and reduces dependence on NGOs.

Throughout the report, we included reports from local leaders outlining the impact the Village Hive has had on their communities. Resourcing and empowering local communities to step into their rightful role as leaders of the Village Hive Project is a critical element of the success of the Village Hive.

Stakeholders include CCWC members, Chief of Women's Affairs, clerks, commune council members, commune chiefs, deputy commune chiefs, deputy municipal governor, school principals, deputy school principals, director of administration, DoSVY, early childhood educators, financial assistants, health centre staff, health centre directors, OSVY, Police, Provincial WCCC, teachers, teaching assistants, union of youth federations of Cambodia, village chiefs, village leaders and village volunteers.

62

local leaders in the commune councils are providing oversight, governance, and monitoring of the services in the Village Hive

22

training sessions with local stakeholders were conducted to implement the Village Hive, including administrative, operational and technical training

140

stakeholders attended training sessions to implement the Village Hive

Financial Statements 2022/2023



Statement of profit and loss for the year ended 30th June 2023

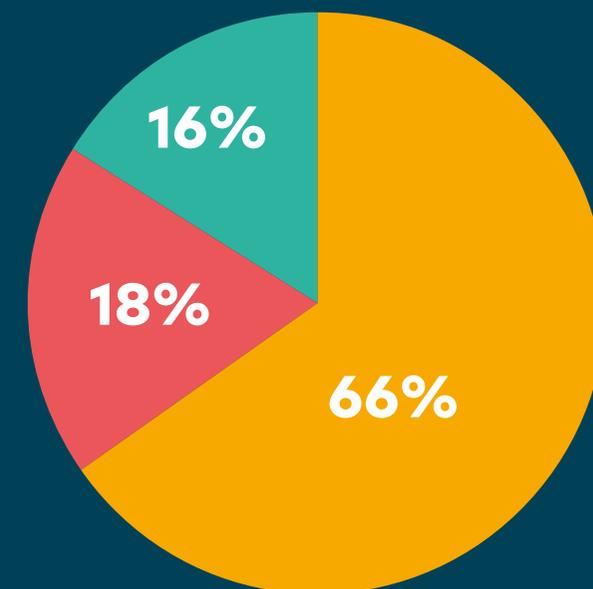
Income from institutional donors such as USAID and the European Union was reduced by 32% from the previous financial year. However, due to the wonderful generosity of our loyal donors and supporters, we have continued to fund our work.

Expenditure was reduced by 7% from the previous financial year as we are no longer providing direct services across Battambang District other than the support provided through the Village Hive.

Income	USD
Donations received directly to CCT	11,000
Exchange rate gain and asset sales	12,536
Funds received from CCTA	630,615
Grants and Restricted Funding	228,107
Interest and Other	141
Total Income	882,399

Expenditure	USD
Village Hive Services	558,947
Crisis Response	186,192
Early Intervention	127,305
Education	196,677
Health Care	20,282
Governance	28,491
Support Services	156,962
Advocacy	17,998
Communications and Donor Support	25,799
Monitoring and Evaluation	23,537
Program Management and Project Directors	89,628
Cambodian Operations	136,546
Administration	60,972
Finance	59,199
Human Resources	16,375
Total Expenses	852,455
NET DEFICIT/SURPLUS	29,944

Expenditure FY22/23 USD



- Cambodian Operations
- Village Hive Services
- Support Services

We All Have a Role To Play



In today's globalised world, the actions of all individuals, communities, and nations are interconnected.

Poverty in one part of the world has a ripple effect across the planet. Living in a world where some people have abundant resources while others struggle to meet their basic needs is inherently unjust, which is why every single one of us has a role to play in the fight to end poverty.

Local people must lead these efforts with the support of international allies through empowering partnerships. By redistributing global wealth, Cambodian people will be empowered to rise to the challenge of developing their own communities, and we will create a more just and prosperous world for everyone.

Do your part in realising this vision by making a donation, spreading the word and sharing this report with your friends and family.

Stay in touch



cambodianchildrenstrust.org



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The design of this report was generously sponsored by APR Creative.



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