



Cambodian
Children's Trust

Svay Pao Village Hive 2023



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.





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