Project Proposal: One Village, One Library

International Youth for a Better World

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**Executive summary**

International Youth for a Better World is an international nonprofit organization that seeks to train and empower young people to lead in their communities and make positive changes. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the U.S. and a registered nonprofit in Cambodia, and we have student chapters at the University of Virginia, the University of Battambang, and the National Institute of Posts, Telecoms & ICT in Cambodia.

One of our pilot projects is to build libraries at primary schools in rural villages in Cambodia. Our goal is for every village in the country to have a library in the next 35 years.

**Statement of Need**

Cambodia has made great strides in improving its literacy rate. According to UNESCO, 92.57% of people between 15 and 24 years of age in Cambodia are literate3. Enrollment in primary schools is evenly divided between boys and girls. But problems remain.

Schools in almost every country in the world are unequal in number and quality between rich and poor. Poor children rarely receive the high-quality education they deserve. In Cambodia, as in many other places, urban literacy is higher than rural literacy. Rural schools are isolated by bad roads, and wealth is concentrated in cities. In spite of the construction of many schools and the efforts of many people, schools in remote rural parts of Cambodia are poorly equipped, and in some places, there are no schools at all. UNESCO reported that almost 185,000 Cambodian children were out of school in 20173.

Cambodia lost most of its librarians and libraries during the genocide of the 1970s. The country’s libraries are still trying to recover. Many small villages are miles away from the closest library2,4. We want to improve rural primary education in Cambodia and provide more opportunities for children to learn by providing primary schools with libraries. One school library in one village can make a big difference to children and their community.

Poverty and inequality cannot be fought without education. Poor children around the world rarely receive the high-quality education they deserve. School libraries can help to redress this imbalance.

**References**

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<https://tascha.uw.edu/2011/12/reconstructing-cambodia-the-role-of-libraries-in-development/>

3. UNESCO. *Cambodia: Education and Literacy*

<http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/kh?theme=education-and-literacy>

4. Va, Sonkya. NGO: More Public Libraries Needed. *Khmer Times*, September 19, 2015.

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/59284/ngo-more-public-libraries-needed/>

**What we have done so far**

We built a library at Turl Laveang Primary School in Turl Laveang village, Sankae district, Battambang Province, Cambodia. The school has 258 students, half boys and half girls. The students have been reading at the library and borrowing books since it opened in December 2019.

The library cost about $6000 to build. To raise money for more books and supplies, we have started a page on Patreon.

Earlier this month we formed a partnership with the Village Library Foundation, a volunteer organization in Cambodia that has created a dozen libraries in villages around the country.

**What we want to do**

We want to work with local people to create a nationwide library network for children all over Cambodia, one village and one small library at a time, so that every village will have a library in 35 years. We will set up a communication system between the libraries so that they can exchange ideas and materials.

Our Patreon patrons and our volunteer fundraisers in Cambodia are raising funds to build more libraries on the same model and send more books and school supplies to the first library. Over time, we want to establish a fund to keep the libraries supplied, increase their book collections, and build more libraries.

We selected library sites at three more rural primary schools in Battambang Province. We want to build library #2 at Prey Toteung Primary School in the village of Bawel, northwest of Battambang city, and we want to build libraries #3 and #4 at Rohal Suong Primary School in the village of Phum Rohal Suong. Phum Rohal Suong is one of a long string of villages along the Sangker River north of Battambang city. The village is on both sides of the river, and there are no bridges nearby. There are two primary school campuses, one on each side of the river, so we will build a library for each one.

Our selection criteria for building a library is to find a primary school in a rural village with no other library. Since we are based in Battambang right now, the village must be accessible from Battambang City, at least during the dry season.

To help us reach as many children as possible, we are seeking endorsement and possibly sponsorship from Cambodia’s Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports.

**Our strengths**

IYfaBW is only two years old, but we have proven that we can get things done with minimal resources, and that our organization is uniquely suited for this project. Our strengths include the following:

* *Our staff has local knowledge.* Our director grew up poor in Battambang Province and understands the educational barriers that poor Cambodian children are up against. He is unswerving in his determination to help. Our Cambodian volunteers and student groups understand the country’s history, geography, government, customs, and culture as only locals can, which builds trust and makes them exceptionally effective.
* *We have an international reach.* IYfaBW is registered as a nonprofit in the U.S. and as a non-governmental organization in Cambodia. Most of the board members at the moment are American, since it began in Virginia. We have a chapter at the University of Virginia and are starting a chapter at the Community College of Rhode Island. We have great potential for expansion through student groups in the U.S.
* *We work with local people and involve them in building the library.* Our goal is to give them access to information, and freedom of information, through books and the internet.
* *We put our money into the projects.* Thanks to our small size and local support, we can get funds directly to people.
* *We know that small libraries in small villages create change.* The children, parents, and teachers of Turl Laveang Primary School use the library all the time. Parents are encouraging their children to study and read. The children love the library and are asking us to send more books. In our opinion, one of the best ways to change a country and raise it out of poverty is one library at one school in one village at a time.

**Proposed annual budget**

Annual salaries

Director $50,000

Cambodia country director $18,000

Accountant/business manager $18,000

Library construction and upkeep $25,000

Emergency/help fund for students and volunteers $5000

Yearly rents

Office in Phnom Penh $3800

Office in Battambang $2800

Office supplies, computers, and internet $1000

Travel funds $15,000

Total $148,000

**Organization information**

International Youth for a Better World (IYfaBW) was founded in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2018.

Founder: Tho Mith Chin

Purpose: To train and empower young people to become leaders in their communities, and to help children learn and create.

Board members:

Tho Mith Chin President/Executive Director

Tola Vy Program Director

Tatenda Mabikacheche Vice President

Roger Hart Director of Development and Communication

Joyce Chow Secretary

Chandara Un Officer

Emily Burns Treasurer

Erin Tor Officer

Brent Clarke Officer

**Conclusion**

International Youth for a Better World is off to a strong start. We have already helped students at one school in Cambodia, and we plan to help many more.