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Thrive Networks, known in Southeast Asia as East Meets West (EMW), enables full access to basic human services for underserved populations in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

We design, test, and implement innovative financing and service delivery models to bring reliable water and sanitation services to underserved communities.
A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

We believe that no one should lack access to clean water and sanitation - a basic human right. Yet, this is still the case for many rural communities in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. This year our work to connect vulnerable and underserved communities to water and sanitation was made so much more urgent due to the threats of Covid-19, salination in the Mekong Delta, and a devastating storm season impacting 7.7 million people in the central Vietnam and parts of Laos. Thanks to our donors and supporters, we were able to adapt to the changing challenges in 2020 and continue to help people in Southeast Asia through these projects:
• Providing reliable and affordable clean drinking water to families
• Connecting homeowners with resources needed to construct latrines within their homes
• Empowering women to educate their families and neighbors on better health practices
• Improving students’ health and wellbeing through school-based sanitation programs
• Building dignified and disaster resilient homes for vulnerable families

Since launching these projects, we’ve seen many changes in our partner communities. Adults are more productive in their work, students have fewer sickness-related absences at school, and parents feel secure knowing that their children can grow in a clean and safe environment.

In 2021, we aim to continue building #ResilienceandHope, reaching new communities and making these changes possible for even more families. All this is only possible with your support and we hope you’ll join us for the years to come...

Resiliently yours,

Lynn Foden
CEO, Thrive Networks
CAMBODIA

Over the past year, our Cambodia team has focused on responding to the ever-changing COVID-19 situation. However, while we have added pandemic response programs to our work, we continue to increase access to general WASH services as well. Around 40% of Cambodia's population lacks access to basic sanitation services. As such, we have been working with government partners and local latrine suppliers to increase sanitation coverage throughout the country.
Fighting COVID-19 with Clean Hands

Each of us has a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

Our Cambodia team learned that most of the poor and vulnerable households in several provinces (Pursat, Kratie, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang and Tbong Khmum) did not know how to properly wash their hands with soap to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. So, the team decided to teach them.

With the government, partners, youth hygiene promoters, our team went from house to house to educate families on proper handwashing through hands-on trainings and demonstrations. The 5,000 families that they met were provided with a handwashing device, bars of soap, face masks and leaflets to help them remember what they learned. We are committed to continue to do our part in getting through this pandemic.
Conversation Starters: Menstrual Health & Hygiene in Cambodia

Menstruation is a taboo topic in many cultures. A lack of understanding, awareness and practical approaches toward menstruation in the local context create gender bias and inclusion issues. As such, it is important to start conversations with women that empower them as leaders in their communities.

In January 2020, Ky, an EMW Consultant, and Saly, Deputy Director of the Department of Rural Health Care, worked together to start these conversations.

The two women mobilized local leaders through Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) training sessions. They facilitated open dialogues on MHH topics, such as the use of hygienic latrines and handwashing with soap. Armed with their new knowledge, the leaders went out into different villages across Kampong Chhnang Province and spoke to community members about MHH. In two months, they reached 597 community members, of which 95% were female.

One of the leaders commented on the results, saying, "Before the MHH training for women and girls in my commune, data from the health center showed that 20-30% of them had abnormal vaginal discharge. After the MHH training, the numbers dropped to 5 -10%.

These results exemplify just how impactful it can be to start conversations on topics that are not openly discussed. In partnership with local stakeholders, we will continue to start conversations that move toward meaningful change.
LAOS

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic has made significant progress in increasing water access and basic sanitation coverage in recent years. However, achieving this in rural areas, where 80% of the population lives, remains a big challenge. Our Laos team has been leveraging our longstanding relationships with government and private sector partners to increase WASH coverage in last-mile communities across the country.
A 70 year-old Burden

After collecting water for personal use for over 70 years, Mrs. Pik, a 75-year-old grandmother from Xayaboury Province, was given the freedom to remove the heavy bamboo pole and water bucket from her shoulders.

She explained her burden to us, saying, “I still remember well, when I was around 5 or 6 years old, I followed my mother to collect water from the Poon River every day, around 300 meters away from our house. It was hard work because we had to collect at least 80 liters every day”.

After connecting to a piped water system in February 2020, Mrs. Pik gained access to clean water right at home. Smiling, she said, “I am so happy with the water we have now; it is very clean. Now, we just turn the tap and everyone can enjoy the water. I feel very good because there is no need to worry about collecting water from the river anymore.”
In Laos, 42% of the rural population does not have access to basic sanitation facilities and resorts to defecating in open places. Open defecation is associated with violence against women and higher mortality rates in children under five. As such, the UN has called for the elimination of open defecation by 2025.

We have been working to eliminate open defecation by helping families in Champasak Province build sanitary latrines. At the end of 2020, 15 of our project villages achieved Open Defecation Free (ODF) status. We are heartened by this progress and will continue to move towards an ODF Laos, one latrine at a time!

Building Healthy Habits

Without access to clean water and latrine facilities at school, students are at a greater risk for waterborne diseases and other health issues.

Mrs. Champy, a 34-year-old teacher in Paklay District acknowledged the unsatisfactory conditions at her own school, noting, “We have two blocks of latrines which is not enough for the nearly 150 students attending the school. We are trying to institute a handwashing campaign, but our facilities lack running water and proper areas for washing. Especially during the dry season, it is almost impossible to practice hygiene activities at school.”

After we built a latrine with 6 blocks and a new handwashing station, Mrs. Champy commented on the impact, saying, “Now, our students are improving their hygiene behavior at school by practicing daily handwashing with soap after using the latrine. They can wash their hands whenever they want! Our students look clean and healthy!”
2020 was an eventful year for our Vietnam team. On top of our usual WASH activities, COVID-19 and severe tropical storms presented additional challenges to overcome throughout the year. However, thanks to the hard work of our staff and the strength of our partnerships, we were able to continue to bring clean water and hygiene supplies to the people who needed it most.
Healthy Health Centers

Drinking water and sanitation are some of the most important factors in preventing diseases, especially at health centers. That's why we provided RO Water Filtration Systems and medical supplies to the staff at Hoa Phong Health Center.

Dr. Nguyen Triem, head of Hoa Phong Health Center, shared, “The lack of clean water for patients and health workers has caused difficulties in treatment as well as increased risks in consuming poor quality bottled water from local grocery stores. East Meets West’s project is effective in preventing COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, as well as encouraging locals to partake in the healthy habit of handwashing with soap.”
Weathering the Storm: Compassion Homes

Last fall, Central Vietnam was hit by several tropical cyclones, resulting in destructive flooding and over 200 fatalities.

Amidst the devastation, the families who live in Compassion Homes built by East Meets West (such as the Le family pictured below) reported that they were safe and that their homes remained strong.

Compassion Homes are high-quality, climate-resilient housing built to withstand the elements of the tropics, including tropical storms and flooding. These homes also serve as the foundation of family life with space for shared meals, rest, and meaningful interactions.

Before, property damage due to severe flooding meant that the Les would have to relocate. Now, in their Compassion Home, they are able to shelter in place in the stormiest of weather conditions. The Les, along with over 600 other Compassion Home families, no longer have to worry about their livelihoods or safety in severe weather.

Weathering the Storm: Emergency Relief

Nga lives in Central Vietnam. Her family struggled in the aftermath of last year's massive storms, but her health conditions and low income made it difficult for the family to quickly recover from the floods.

Nga's family is one of 32 families who benefitted from our emergency relief response thanks to the support of donors all over the world. Gratefully, she said, “Now, I can now pay off my family's health insurance and home repair debt. I have more free time to be with my grandchild.”
Mrs. Yen lives with her elderly Auntie Bo, who is blind and walks on a prosthetic leg. As Auntie Bo grew older, Yen was forced to give up her job to care for her aunt. With the support of East Meets West and the Vietnam Women’s Union, Yen built a hygienic and accessible latrine. By giving Auntie Bo a toilet, she gained more than just a daily convenience: her dignity was restored. Yen was also able return to work. Yen’s family is one of 28,000 benefitting from our Women-led Output-Based Aid (WOBA) program in Vietnam. WOBA aims to improve water, sanitation and hygiene conditions for disadvantaged people in rural areas; empower women by making them changing agents; and ensure no one is left behind.

Dignity: a short film on Women-Led Output-Based Aid

To watch the film, click here: East Meets West's Youtube Channel
FINANCIALS  YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

Revenue
- Grants $2,816,205
- Contributions $369,134
- Contract services $13,496
- In-kind contributions $178
- Carry over revenue from previous years $1,679,628
  TOTAL $4,878,641

Expenses
- Program services $2,536,636
- Management and general $721,969
- Fundraising $116,863
  TOTAL $3,375,468

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$100,000-$999,999
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Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)/Australian Aid
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$25,000-$99,000
Anonymous

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ISF- Institute of Sustainable Futures, University of Sydney
IWEM- Institute of Water and Environmental Management

VIETNAM
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
Ministry of Construction (MOC)
Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)

CAMBODIA
Cambodian Disabled People’s Organization
Cambodian Water Supply Association
Commune Councils/Commune Committees for Women and Children

LAOS
The Department of Water Supply (DWS) under the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and People’s Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM)
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