

# IMMERSION TRIP

## A FACT-FINDING MISSION



1555 NORTH ASTOR STREET ♦ CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA 60610  
T/773 306 8159 ♦ F/773 304 2888  
BUILDCAMBODIA.ORG

**BUILD CAMBODIA**  
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### HISTORY OF CAMBODIA



Cambodia is a small country of 12 million people located in the heart of Southeast Asia, sandwiched between a powerful Vietnam and a prosperous Thailand. Today, it is a peaceful country. However, in the late 1970s, Cambodia was the site of one of the world's most hideous episodes of genocide in modern times. This quiet Kingdom was destabilized by the fighting in neighboring Vietnam in the late 1960s, leading to the emergence of the ruthless Khmer Rouge in 1975. In the following three years the Khmer Rouge caused the death of nearly two million Cambodians through torture, execution, forced starvation and disease. It took twenty-years and a major United Nations peace effort for the country to return to some semblance of sanity and stability. Having lost the most educated and capable citizens to genocide, Cambodia remains the poorest nation in Southeast Asia, and is handicapped by a lack of the human capacity required to function as a civil society.

### CAMBODIA TODAY

To an average tourist, Cambodia is a peaceful, but undeveloped country with pleasant people, comfortable accommodations and majestic ancient temples. Beneath this veneer is a society plagued by debilitating poverty, malnutrition, diseases long banished elsewhere in the world, sex trafficking, the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate in Asia and widespread corruption. Cambodians struggle for survival every day against seemingly insurmountable odds.

While the government there has failed to meet its needs of the people and the international community has long since forgotten the "crisis in Cambodia," a few individuals, both Cambodians and foreigners have stepped forward to initiate projects, both large and small, that are starting to make the difference between life and death and hope and despair for Cambodians. They are **Building Cambodia** one life at a time.



## ABOUT BUILD CAMBODIA



Build Cambodia is a U.S. based not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping Cambodians build their lives and society while ensuring that this corner of the world is not forgotten. Our unique contribution is creating awareness, facilitating exposure, and encouraging commitment among Americans and individuals from other nations to provide the valued assistance that can make such a difference in this needy land. We advocate for Cambodian organizations in the U.S., facilitate individual projects that Americans are undertaking, and lead regular Immersion Trips where talented adults tour of Cambodia and visit unique places that few foreigners ever see. We know that these and other efforts will build the steady flow of energy and talent into the country necessary to rebuild its society.

## THE IMMERSION TRIP

Everyday, we run into talented, skilled Americans from all walks of life who wish to make a difference in the world. Their time, talent and/or treasure is exactly what is so needed in Cambodia. Teachers, accountants, nurses, farmers, businessmen, policemen, doctors, librarians, social workers, mechanics, and writers: these are just a sample of the skills and experience needed to help build rebuild Cambodian society. The purpose of our Immersion Trips is to take individuals like these on an **in-depth seven-day tour** of the country, with hopes that participants will, in turn, develop a real commitment to building the country.

From one end of Cambodia to the other, participants in Build Cambodia's Immersion Trips travel to a variety of places, including hospitals, schools, villages, orphanages, courts of law, universities, newspapers, embassies, factories and women's shelters. Participants meet with everyone from foreign ambassadors and organization directors to Cambodian adults and children to learn about their hopes for the future and their diverse challenges. Cambodian interpreters travel with our group to facilitate cross-cultural communication.



## A CONTINUED COMMITMENT



When the Build Cambodia trip is over, our participants are changed people. Ask and they will tell you they have gained a profound understanding of the challenges of rebuilding in a post-conflict society. Our participants share their life changing encounters once they return. They will tell you about the rich and unexpected friendships they have made with Cambodians and fellow participants. And, we hope, our participants make a commitment to return to Cambodia, whether physically or in spirit, to continue to make a world of difference, half a world away.