

THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION AND THE WORK OF NON-PROFITS IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA: SELECT CASE STUDIES IN CAMBODIA AND THE
PHILIPPINES IN MODERN TIMES

by

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DEDICATION

The start to a better life, or a better world, or a better future is simply our belief that it is possible. I would like to dedicate this work to the people of Cambodia and to the people of the Philippines. I have seen their tears and heard their stories. Regardless of the pain, they continue to smile. After everything I have learned, I genuinely have hope for both countries, and for the future of this world.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BFT	Build Your Future Today
CDC	Clark Development Corporation
CPP	Cambodia's People's Party
FDI	Foreign Domestic Investment
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
FUNK	National United Front of Kampuchea
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	Indigenous People
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous People
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PR	Paradise Ranch
STEM	Science Technology Engineering Mathematics
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
USSR	Union Soviet Socialist Republic
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of a non-government organization (NGO) called Build Your Future Today (BFT) in Cambodia and a non-profit social enterprise called Paradise Ranch (PR) in the Philippines. Both entities, in one way or another, focus on educational improvement—BFT by teaching knowledge leading to self-sustaining enterprises and PR by educating Indigenous People to maintain their forest environment and then to go beyond to develop their talents. This study also provides a description and analysis of the challenges that the Cambodian and Filipino governments face today, particularly in coming to grips with the enormous and critical need of education in an increasingly interdependent world. The key and unique resource for this study was individual, on site interviews by me of natives involved in daily life, in education, and in the two above-mentioned non-profit entities in Cambodia and the Philippines. In Cambodia, a two-month case study was conducted in Siem Reap to assess and observe how the NGO, Build Your Future Today Center, assisted in the education system within rural areas. In the Philippines, research was conducted in Pampanga to assess and observe how the social enterprise, Paradise Ranch, assisted Indigenous People to conserve the environment. Although both organizations specialized in different matters, the challenge of education was central to each entity and thus becomes a way to compare the effectiveness of the two non-profits and of the challenges that they and the respective governments confront in improving the lives of the people.

In order to place the challenge of education and the role of the government and

the non-profit endeavors into context, a history of Cambodian education and a history of the Indigenous People in the Philippines is provided. It includes information on how both countries evolved under colonial powers, different types of governments, religious institutions, and war. Additionally, an analysis of the role of non-profits within Cambodia and the Philippines further explains the impact that these entities have made on local communities. The interviews of students, teachers, members of the Indigenous People, and managers of Build Your Future Today and of Paradise Ranch have been summarized to protect the identity of all involved and to more easily describe and summarize qualitative information and results.

The conclusion of this study is that education is essential to the modernization of Cambodia and the Philippines. There are many challenges to education. In both countries, governments must eliminate corruption and begin remedying the many challenges to education by first prioritizing needs and then investing in education, with a special focus on rural communities in Cambodia and on the environment and Indigenous People in the Philippines. The theory of *backwards mapping* may apply to variations of culture as it might be a template that could work in Cambodia or Philippines. It stresses that the government must first understand local needs before it can address countrywide needs. In both countries, the government should offer more resources and educational tools to ensure that the lives of the rural communities and Indigenous People are enriched and have a hopeful future. This study also concludes that non-profits can be quite useful in the education field. The key to effectiveness occurs when the government is short of

resources, and NGOs and non-profit social enterprises step in and provide resources and ultimately show success by transferring knowledge and technology to local constituencies who then become self-sustaining enterprises or individuals who no longer need non-profit assistance. Like BFT and Paradise Ranch, such local enterprises must consider generating other types of revenues to become self-sustainable.

I. CASE STUDY 1: CAMBODIA

Introduction

After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, the citizens of Cambodia have spent nearly forty years trying to rebuild their country. Paramount for stability and growth in this rebuilding effort was education. It was essential that the Cambodian government invest in a strong foundation for education so that in the future the country's citizens could become more innovative and competitive worldwide. As of today, the education system of Cambodia has not yet reached the same status as that of developed countries. In 2000, the Human Development Report determined that out of 174 countries, Cambodia had ranked 136th.¹ This lowly position and slow growth can be attributed to the fact that within the country itself, the education system is not yet the top priority of the Cambodian government, particularly in rural Cambodia. Non-government organizations have recognized this dilemma and have attempted to improve the schools in the countryside by establishing various community programs. This case study examines the many challenges that Cambodia faces in its education system and then examines the work of one prominent non-government organization (NGO) called Build Your Future Today (BFT) in its effort to help improve rural education.

Methodology

In 2016, a two-month case study was conducted in Siem Reap, Cambodia to assess and observe the education system in rural areas. Research was made possible through the collaboration of the non-government organization, Build Your Future Today

1. Margaret Slocomb, *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2010), 11

Center. With BFT's assistance, visits were made on a weekly basis to a total of fourteen schools located within a few hours of Siem Reap. Five teachers and 160 students were interviewed through a translator offered by BFT. Furthermore, nine staff members of BFT were also interviewed.

Students selected for the interviews were a part of a uniform program that BFT created. The program consisted of giving each student a free uniform every year because the government requires that all students wear a uniform to school. For each school that holds about 150 students or less, an average of 40 students are chosen either by the teachers or BFT to be a part of the uniform program because these students are determined to be the poorest of the poor. Prior to the interview or group discussion, it was explicitly stated to the student that there was no pressure to answer any question and the interview could stop at any time if there were any sudden feelings of discomfort. Although the following questions were simple, the students gave responses that provided a lot of insight into their thoughts of the future, current concerns, domestic problems, and daily life.

Questions to the Students

- How long have you been affiliated with the uniform program?
- What is your favorite part about being in school?
- What are some of the educational challenges that you have faced?
- What would you like to be when you grow up and why?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- Can you describe your home and family life?
- Are there any worries that you currently have?
- Is there anything you want to share with me?

Teachers who were interviewed were involved in selecting students to be a part of the uniform program. The teacher would generally visit every family in the village to

determine which home was deemed the most impoverished. Those teachers were interviewed because the faculty understood the education system, the multitude of problems that were going on with each student, and the number of challenges that were presented to a teacher working in the villages.

Questions to the Teachers

- What is your educational background?
- How long have you been a teacher?
- Why did you want to be a teacher?
- How did you select the students that are part of the uniform program?
- What are some of the educational challenges that you have faced as a teacher to so many children?
- In the future, what do you hope to see for the school?
- Has the government assisted the school in any way?
- If you could tell the world about the children of Cambodian and the education system, what would you want the world to know?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

After the interviews, a tour of the grounds was made to assess the general needs for the school. Books, supplies, a library, classrooms, water filter, garden, playground, toilets, and electricity were some of the factors considered when reviewing a village school.

Additionally, staff members at BFT were interviewed to understand what the organization had done in the last ten years, what were the goals of the non-profit, and what were the challenges and achievements of the individual staff member and the organization as a whole. These indicators assisted in gathering evidence as to how a non-government organization operated in a previously war-torn country.

Questions to Build Your Future Today

- What is your role with the organization?
- What is your background and education?
- Have you served in any other previous roles with the organization?

- How long have you worked in the organization?
- Why did you choose to work with this organization?
- What are the daily tasks and challenges you face each day?
- What do you feel is the largest impact you have personally made within the organization?
- How does the non-profit operate internally on a daily basis?
- Why did the non-profit choose to work with a social-enterprise?
- How does the social enterprise work?
- What could make the organization better?
- What successes have the organization made?
- What failures, lessons, or challenges has the organization faced?
- What is the future plans of the organization?
- How is the non-profit funded?
- Does the government provide any aid or support for the non-profit?
- Does the government support or challenge the work of the non-profit?
- Are there any other external factors that the organization has predominantly faced? This can include (but not limited to) terrorism, warfare, disease, or natural disasters. If so, how did the organization overcome such external factors?
- How are clients chosen to participate in the benefits offered by the non-profit?

Overall, the qualitative data collected was useful to comprehend what the current situation is, what particular challenges are currently being faced, and what the future may be for those attending rural schools.

Country Profile With a Focus on Challenges to Education

The Kingdom of Cambodia is located in South East Asia and lies to the east of Thailand, west of Vietnam, and south of Laos. As of 2015, Cambodia possesses a population of 15.58 million.² The majority of citizens who reside in Cambodia are ethnically Khmer while the remaining ten percent of the population mostly include Cham, Vietnamese, Chinese, and indigenous people.³

Within Cambodia, Phnom Penh is the capital and located in the south-central

2. The World Bank, "Cambodia," The World Bank, 2016, accessed July 13, 2016, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia>

3. Caroline Hughes, *Studies On Southeast Asia. Vol. 48, Dependent Communities: Aid and Politics in Cambodia and East Timor*, (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2009), 9.

region. There are twenty different provinces and four municipalities throughout Cambodia and a governor rules each province. The provinces are then divided into 183 districts. The 183 districts are then separated by 1,609 communes and the communes contain about 13,406 local villages.⁴ The government is formed as a constitutional monarchy, and the current Prince of Cambodia is Norodom Sihamoni. However, it is the Prime Minister, Hun Sen, who possesses authoritarian power over the state, and he has been in office since 1993 and is the leader of the Cambodian People's Party.⁵ While other political parties, such as the Cambodian National Rescue Party and the Sam Rainsy Party, try to contest the CPP, the CPP continues to dominate Cambodian politics. Cambodia is a part of several international organizations. Cambodia joined the United Nations in 1998, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2000, and the World Trade Organization in 2004.⁶ Cambodia has a dual currency in which the Cambodian riel and the United States dollar are both accepted. During the Khmer Rouge, the banks were destroyed and Cambodia is still striving to establish a sound financial system. This is clearly a major challenge to education investment.

In addition, the economy is relatively unproductive. In the 2015-2016 report, Cambodia ranked 90th out of 140 countries in worldwide competitiveness.⁷ Since the dissolution of the Khmer Rouge, billions of dollars in foreign aid has been disbursed to Cambodia in an attempt to stimulate the economy and the recovery process. Outside countries or organization's that have made large donations have tried to pressure the

4. The World Bank, 8.

5. British Broadcasting Company, "Cambodia Profile - Leaders," British Broadcasting Company, July 9, 2014, accessed July, 18, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13006542>.

6. Slocumb, 1.

7. World Economic Forum, "Competitiveness Rankings," World Economic Forum, 2016, accessed July 17, 2016. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/competitiveness-rankings/>

government to focus on important investment and infrastructure issues such as, “investment law, demobilization, funding for commune elections, implementation of good governance reforms; other issues included progress on the Khmer Rouge tribunal, forestry reform, and the land law.”⁸ However, the government typically mismanages funding and agreements are not always honored or enforced. The result has been an endless cycle of dependence. There is one clear exception, though. China, which is the regional power that is interested in enhancing its geopolitical and economic influence in Southeast Asia and is willing to overlook a modicum of local corruption, has developed close ties with Cambodia. In modern times, China has offered large amounts of aid and redevelopment projects to Cambodia. In exchange, Cambodia has allotted land for Chinese businesses, allowed increased Chinese immigration, and may also permit in the future ports for docking Chinese naval ships and Cambodian territory for drilling by Chinese oil firms.⁹ China’s geopolitical interests do not match up with Cambodia’s need to enhance its investment in education and, thus, constitutes a distraction and drag on the priorities of the Cambodian people and modernization.

Vietnam, which shares a border with China and Cambodia, has an interest in balancing growing Chinese influence in Cambodia, but due to centuries of past conflicts between Cambodia and Vietnam, Hanoi has not been too effective in Phnom Penh. Tension lingers over Cambodian discrimination against Vietnamese in Cambodia, border and territorial disputes from the French colonial period, which has also produced an anti-French sentiment in Cambodia, and hard feelings from the Khmer Rouge era when, Pol

8. Slocomb, 24-25.

9. Hughes, 162.

Pot made the Vietnamese a target along with a multitude of other victims.¹⁰ The geopolitical and historical enmity between Cambodia and Vietnam is yet another drain on the need to improve education in Cambodia.

In 2015, the World Health Organization declared that in Cambodia, the average life expectancy is 72 years of age, and for every 1,000 live births, the mortality rate for children under five years of age is 38. For adults, heart disease, tuberculosis, strokes, respiratory infections, and HIV/AIDS, are the top five leading causes of death.

Additionally, immunizations for children under one year of age has increased to nearly 90 percent, about 51 percent of the population utilizes contraception, 42 percent of males smoke tobacco, approximately 70 percent have improved drinking water sources, and less than 40 percent have improved sanitation facilities.¹¹ In the last decade, the government and NGO's have made significant advances to bringing Cambodia towards modern health standards. However, there are still an extensive amount of areas that must be focused on. HIV/AIDS must be controlled, the availability of clean water should be higher, the infant mortality rate should be much lower, and malnourishment continues to be an ongoing problem. Moreover, technological advances in medical care are another barrier that must be overcome. Another factor is that the Khmer people still prefer to practice traditional Eastern medicine instead of visiting Western-style hospitals that can be too costly for the average citizen.¹² The health issue is yet another impediment to Cambodia's need to invest in education.

10. Karen J. Coates, *Cambodia Now: Life in the Wake of War*, (Jefferson: McFarland, 2005), 71-72.

11. World Health Organization, "Cambodia Who Statistical Profile: Country Statistics and Global Health," World Health Organization, January 2015, accessed September 4, 2016, 1-3.
<http://www.who.int/gho/countries/khm.pdf?ua=1>

12. Coates, 203-206.

Additionally, Cambodia faces internal problems with the injustice of women and children exploitation. In Khmer culture, women have undergone many inequalities. Even though the government states that both sexes have equal rights to education, women are more marginalized than men as families generally require females to quit school, work on the farm, or sell goods at a Khmer market. Furthermore, women customarily marry at a young age and are typically expected to fulfill the traditional role of wife and homemaker. In a national study conducted in 2015, the United Nations discovered that more than 51 percent of partnered women have faced physical violence in their lifetime.¹³ Although the findings were staggering, most women stay silent due to the strong mistrust of the law enforcement and the government's participation in corruption and acts of bribery. Unfortunately, domestic abuse, rape, and prostitution are also the fate of many women. Feeling as though their options are limited, prostitution among women has been a last resort to provide for their families. However, by doing this, not only does the woman's reputation become permanently damaged among the locals, but the risk of contracting HIV or AIDS has also been increasingly prevalent over the years. The United Nations found that in 2015, approximately 37,000 Cambodian women above the age of 15 years are currently living with HIV.¹⁴

Concerning Cambodian children, the youth are being exploited all over the country in various ways. According to the humanitarian organization *Friends*, there is an estimated 1,500 children who work relentlessly on the street to earn money for their

13. United Nations, "National Survey On Women's Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia: Report," United Nations, 2015, accessed September 4, 2016, 54.
<http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2015/11/national%20survey%20on%20womens%20health%20and%20life%20experiences%20in%20cambodia.pdf?v=1&d=20151120T040512>

14. UNAids, "Cambodia," UNAids, 2015, accessed September 4, 2016,
<http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/cambodia>

families, 1,200 who have run away to urban centers and live on their own, and more than 20,000 who have specifically left home to work in Phnom Penh.¹⁵ Those who are living off the street may fall victim to losing further educational opportunities, have lower health standards, engage in crime, and possibly partake in substance abuse. Another point of contention that minors face includes the subject of orphanages. In Cambodia, the definition of an orphan is skewed because it doesn't necessarily mean that the child is parentless because both the mother and father have passed away. Some children derive from very difficult backgrounds that inadvertently led them to live in an orphanage. Examples may be that the child was sold to an orphanage because the parents were unable to afford another mouth to feed, or the child had left their home due to physical or sexual abuse, or some may have even been abandoned so that the family could find work abroad. While there are orphanages operated by NGO's that have good intentions, there are institutions that exist solely to profit off such cases. Known as *orphanage tourism*, international visitors who are looking to volunteer with children, inadvertently donate to organizations with ill motives. Such orphanages, sometimes referred to as residential housing, tend to house children like cattle and reap the benefits of a child's desperate situation. In an extreme circumstance, the child is re-sold, trafficked, and then placed in a brothel.¹⁶ In the *United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, it is stipulated that all resources and measures should first be explored before a child is sent to residential housing.¹⁷ While this is the state's responsibility, Cambodia's government

15. Coates, 175-176.

16. Ibid, 177.

17. United Nations, "Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly-Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children," United Nations 64th Session, February 24, 2010, accessed September 4, 2016, 2. http://www.thinkchildsafe.org/thinkbeforevisiting/resources/UN_GA_Res_on_AC_2010.pdf

confronts the obstacle of non-traditional orphanages steadily on the rise. Between 2005 to 2010, there was a 75 percent increase of registered institutional care facilities, but the number of orphanages was much higher because many new orphanages typically did not officially register with the government.¹⁸ Moreover, the government has no effective mechanisms to undertake background checks or require minimum standards once an orphanage is formed. The exploitation of women and children is a huge problem to the priority of education in Cambodia.

The many challenges that Cambodia faces—from geopolitical problems to bad health to exploitation of women and children—helps explain in part why the education system in Cambodia is undeveloped. Not only does most of the population suffer psychologically from past civil strife, but also in all areas of life, several barriers can prevent the average child from receiving a proper education. Political institutions, financial burdens, domestic issues, medical concerns, and social inequalities are examples of the complications that an individual must overcome to elevate their chance of bettering themselves and their families. But education could help solve many of these challenges, so it is the priority.

History of Cambodian Education

When analyzing how the educational system came to be what it is today, it is necessary to also understand the past evolution of events. Historically, there have been five major transitional phases that have specifically affected Cambodia's approach to the instruction of knowledge. The Buddhist education system, the French education system,

18. Think Child Safe, *A Study of Attitudes Towards Residential Care in Cambodia*, (Phnom Penh: Think Child Safe, 2011),, 34, accessed September 4, 2016, http://www.thinkchildsafe.org/thinkbeforevisiting/resources/Study_Attitudes_towards_RC.pdf.

the post-colonial education system, education during a wartime economy, and the post-wartime economy are all critical moments in Cambodian history.

Buddhist Education

Religiously, the country has primarily identified with Theravada Buddhism, which was established around the 13th century.¹⁹ Theravada, a southern school of Buddhism, “shuns all sensual and aesthetic pleasures and desires...[which it] claims ... better fits the needs of common people” and stresses the idea of karma, which is inevitable fate.²⁰ This distinguished belief is exactly what made Theravada Buddhism so appealing to the masses. Over the years, Theravada Buddhism formed deep roots within Cambodian society culturally, psychologically and within the education and political system. Since Theravada Buddhism teaches followers that external issues are beyond an individual’s control, it has been perceived in a psychological study that Cambodians are more tolerant to social abuses and government corruption.²¹ It is possible this quasi-Stoic aspect of Buddhism, along with the acceptance of karma, may be a partial explanation as to why Cambodians are able to cope somewhat with conflict and abuse that occurred over the last century.

French Education

French imperialism in Indochina began towards the end of the 19th century. Under the guise of *mission civilisatrice*, the French had established a protectorate over Cambodia in 1863.²² The French had viewed the Khmer as an indigenous and

19. Alexandra Kent and David P. Chandler, eds. *Nias Studies in Asian Topics. Vol. 43, People of Virtue: Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Morality in Cambodia Today*, (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008), 18.

20. Coates, 92.

21. *Ibid.*, 148.

22. Gerard A. Postiglione and Jason Tan, eds. *Going to School in East Asia*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 42.

underdeveloped people. Under the principle of *mission civilisatrice*, the French wanted to Westernize the country through a series of reforms. One of the most significant changes that France implemented within Cambodia was the French education model. This policy aimed to instill French customs and language across Indochina in order to transform the Southeast Asians, including the Cambodians, into Francophone societies that would serve French interests and produce citizens work alongside fellow Frenchmen.

The Franco-Cambodian structure had permitted both females and males to engage in three levels of education accompanied with an optional level. The first level was considered to be primary education and consisted of three years. Students could then proceed to the second level, known as complementary schools, which would require three additional years of study. Upon completion, an individual could attend four more years of advanced primary education. Those who wished to continue further had the option to attend the fourth level of three more years of secondary education. During the period of French colonization, there were no universities available for those who desired a degree.²³ Those few elite students who wanted a university education had to travel abroad to obtain it.

In an effort to appeal to the Khmer, the French attempted to cross over methods of the Franco-Cambodian instructional system with the Buddhist education system so that Western knowledge could be extended to those living at a monastery. However, unlike the Franco-Cambodian arrangement that was open to the public, the monks taught students Khmer and only dedicated one hour per week to learn the French language.²⁴ Perhaps monks' focus on Khmer instead of French was a small act of defiance against

23. Gerard A. Postiglione and Jason Tan, 43.

24. Ibid., 44.

imperial rule. Regardless, this choice hindered students from progressing further within the Franco-Cambodian education system because most students were unable to master French and pass the *Certificat d'Etudes Elementaires Indigenes* exam.²⁵

Although the French education reform was valuable, the enrollment of ethnic Khmer was relatively low. Those who did initially partake in the Franco-Cambodian system were originally Chinese, Vietnamese, European, or from the privileged elite.²⁶ Several factors caused the Khmer to be marginalized. Due to family traditions and customs, females still had a very small presence in the education system. Additionally, the males who were a part of the Buddhist education system lost interest in the curriculum because of the realistic probability that they could not continue into secondary school because they did not know French. In the rural areas, it was worse. The daily life of working within the agricultural sector, possessing little income, and being remote from educational facilities meant rural children were not educated. In the end, the Franco-Cambodian education system did not benefit the bulk of the population.

In summary, while the French were focused on reforming the Cambodian education system, there were many obstacles to the Khmer being able to access it. A large part of society, including females and rural students, was ignored. In addition, the French did not interfere with Cambodian Buddhist education, which also cut off many male students from higher education. As a result, there was not a high amount of participation from the Khmer in the French schools. However, the culture of the French did show the Khmer that a modern education was necessary in order to stay competitive worldwide.

25. Ibid., 44.

26. Ibid., 43.

Post-Colonial Education from 1953-1970

Several years after World War II, a domino effect of de-colonization began to occur. For a short time, the Kingdom of Cambodia had declared its independence in 1953.²⁷ After France granted Cambodia complete sovereignty, the transition toward full independence was fitful, which complicated the process of improving education. As part of the plan to modernize the country, Prince Norodom Sihanouk began to shift the domestic focus towards new educational reforms. He increased both the Franco-Cambodian and the Buddhist school systems, but he did not open the way for females whose representation in schools actually declined. The reason for this was that fluency in French was increasingly a requirement for secondary education, which females did not learn, and, secondly, there was a cultural expectation for women to be married at a young age.²⁸

Another problem was that there were no universities in Cambodia. This reality caused the government to hire professionals from outside the country because the few Cambodians who could serve as teachers were needed to work in key industries such as science, medicine, and engineering.²⁹ Therefore, the government utilized foreign aid in order to build educational institutions to train properly its citizens. By 1968, there were 2,000 primary schools, 200 high schools, and 9 universities.³⁰ Although these figures were quite impressive, the outcomes were not as beneficial as the government had hoped. The Cambodian universities had begun by partnering either with the Union Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) or France in hopes of producing graduates in engineering,

27. *Ibid.*, 45.

28. *Ibid.*, 46.

29. Slocumb, 77.

30. *Ibid.*, 91.

science, business, and technology, but the majority of students chose to pursue degrees in the Arts.³¹ With little interest in fields that could enhance the economy, the government's plan to modernize the economy and Cambodian society foundered. Then conflict erupted across Southeast Asia when the consequences of the Cold War and the Sino-Soviet feud reached the region. The Vietnam War inadvertently stirred a revolution against the throne and the economy collapsed in the wake of that revolution.³²

Education During a Wartime Economy from 1970-1989

Once Prince Sihanouk had been overthrown, General Lon Nol took over leadership of the government and formed the Khmer Republic in 1970. Within months, the Khmer Rouge appeared and destabilized Cambodia with the support of the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), the Prince in exile, and Communist China. During this same time, the Americans and South Vietnamese crossed into Cambodia in order, they said, to destroy the bases of the North Vietnamese and their Viet Cong allies. Their presence and the presence of some Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia exacerbated what was already a violent civil war, which traumatized the Cambodian people as the bombing campaigns had destroyed the country. According to Margaret Slocomb, the Khmer Rouge fled to the interior of country where “the Khmer communist mobilized and organized thousands of peasants who joined the FUNK at the summons of their Prince. Thus, when the main forces of the U.S. invasion withdrew on 30 June that year [1970], a brutal civil war had already begun and Cambodian government had lost control over approximately half the country side.”³³ This civil strife in Cambodia caused

31. Ibid., 92.

32. Ibid., 126.

33. Ibid., 133.

unfathomable destruction across the landscape for the next two decades. When the Khmer Rouge refused to sign the Peace Accords with the United States and North Vietnam in Paris in 1973, the United States unleashed a massive bombing campaign against Cambodia. This consequently led the Khmer Republic to fall and allow Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge to completely take over in 1975 as the government of Democratic Kampuchea.³⁴ The economy as a whole then collapsed- institutional corruption increased, food was scarce, the price of goods was inflated, network systems were destroyed, refugees proliferated, and life expectancy plunged.

The Khmer were not the only ones who suffered. Vietnamese citizens, who were also living in Cambodia, were assailed, too. Under the direction of Lon Nol, over 3,500 innocent Vietnamese civilians were wrongfully persecuted.³⁵ The government and the Khmer community alike already had distaste for Vietnamese due to a long-term remembrance of historical grievances. The war only spurred more anti-Vietnamese sentiments.

The Khmer Rouge regime orchestrated an astounding number of deaths and a refugee crisis because of their policies of collectivization and purges. Scholars later estimated that, “after examining the whole of the decade of the 1970’s, the total loss in Kampuchea’s population, including refugees, amounted to nearly two million people. This means a loss of almost 30 percent of the entire population.”³⁶ By 1975, the Khmer Rouge had destroyed all Buddhist monasteries, Buddhist educational facilities, and persecuted anyone who practiced the faith.³⁷ As the torturous regime of the Khmer Rouge

34. Ibid., 134.

35. Ibid., 143.

36. Ibid., 190.

37. Alexandra Kent and David P. Chandler, 258.

persisted, forces of opposition began to gather.

Backed by the USSR and the National Salvation Front Forces of Cambodia, the People's Army of Vietnam and an assembly of refugee civilians came together in an effort to defeat the Khmer Rouge in 1978.³⁸ In 1979 Vietnam invaded Cambodia and ended the Khmer Rouge nightmare and set up the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Eventually the Vietnamese withdrew and in 1989 the state of Cambodia was established. In 1993 elections returned Norodom Sihanouk as a constitutional monarch of the Kingdom of Cambodia.³⁹

Needless to say, education suffered greatly during the wartime era. The three regimes during the war years had various educational policies, but education in general declined precipitously. For Lon Nol and the Khmer Republic, it was important to appeal to the young adult population. With the adoption of the political ideology called Neo-Khmerism, Lol Nol aimed to spur a nationalistic zest for Buddhism and the Khmer race. Neo-Khmerism's educational policy facilitated three fundamental features that included "civics education, Khmer as the language of instruction, and the mobilization of students" to protect the country.⁴⁰ This approach had an unintended consequence when many youth left school to support the government by leaving to join the military or forming local defensive forces. In addition, the war had destroyed the infrastructure and physical facilities of universities and public schools and thus these schools remained closed which meant there were fewer schools for students to attend. With resources in short supply, the student population dispersed.

38. *Ibid.*, 177.

39. *Ibid.*, 178.

40. Slocomb, 147.

During the Khmer Rouge, education was largely ignored. There were some primary schools for basic literacy, but the curriculum was filled with political content. When the People's Republic of Kampuchea assumed power, the government was interested in improving education, but it did not mandate school attendance. Yet, the students who did attend secondary education were prepared to later work in technical or labor-intensive industries.⁴¹ Despite this fact, the majority of this generation was illiterate. While the People's Republic of Kampuchea eventually made it a priority to increase literacy among the population, the rural villages still suffered compared to the urban region.⁴²

Education in a Post-Wartime Economy

Since the re-establishment of the constitutional monarchy, there has been some improvement in education. Initially, the 4+3+3 education system, which had existed before the Khmer Rouge era, was re-established and “was expanded to a system of 5+3+3 and 6+3+3 in 1996.”⁴³ However, the economy was weak and the government was notoriously corrupt and included a strong patronage system that encouraged bribery and nepotism. Although there has been a noticeable amount of per capita GDP growth of over ten percent in recent years, it is temporary and attributed to the export of timber, metals, gas, and textiles.⁴⁴ Generally, countries that specialize in such industries are typically correlated with bad governance, which helps explain why Cambodia still has high levels of corruption and poverty. Furthermore, these industries do not require higher

41. Ibid., 204.

42. Ibid., 205.

43. Yasushi Hirosato and Kitamura Yuto eds. *Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects. Vol. 13, The Political Economy of Educational Reforms and Capacity Development in Southeast Asia: Cases of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 113.

44. Sophal Ear, *Aid Dependence in Cambodia: How Foreign Assistance Undermines Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 50.

education, which means there is reduced incentive to pursue higher education and those who do receive higher education will most likely be unemployed.⁴⁵ There are other problems, too. The government spends little on education, certainly nowhere near enough to meet the challenge of increasing enrollments. In addition, the faculty are poorly trained and underpaid. At the end of the 20th century Cambodia had 2.4 million students enrolled, 58.8 million dollars of the budget was allocated to education, and the teachers income went from 8 dollars per month to 33 dollars per month.⁴⁶ In the countryside, matters were worse. Not only was there minute investment in education, but there was also little investment in infrastructures, health, and job training.

Buddhist education did enjoy a minor revival. After the dissolution of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, Buddhism was permitted once more. Since the revival of Buddhism, monasteries, pagodas, and educational institutions have greatly expanded over the years to reach more provinces. The increase in the number of monasteries can be attributed to the fact that interest grew because young men were officially allowed to be ordained as monks. Prior to 1988, only men who were older than 55 years or older could be a monk.⁴⁷ After this reform, the attendance for students became higher in all levels of Buddhist education and more accommodations had to be made. Increased number of students remains a challenge for Buddhists in Cambodia because of limited resources. Just as it is in rural educational systems, there is a shortage of investment in textbooks, teachers, and infrastructure.⁴⁸

Today, there are four different levels of Buddhist education. Various subjects of

45. Slocumb, 291.

46. Ibid., 255.

47. Ibid., 258.

48. Ibid., 268.

Buddhism and non-religious studies of the arts and sciences are taught. Exams are required to be completed in order to reach the next level. The first level begins with the Buddhist primary school, which was re-opened in 1989 and requires three years of study.⁴⁹ Buddhist secondary education re-opened in 1993 and is sub-divided into a lower and upper level. Each level requires three years of study.⁵⁰ After a total of six years learning at the secondary level, a student can then opt to attend Buddhist higher education. Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University was the first to open in 1999.⁵¹ Should a scholar desire to continue after attending university, another three levels of education can be attained with the *Dhamma-Vinaya*. Within the *Dhamma-Vinaya*, there are three sub-levels called *Thnak Trey*, *Thnak Toa*, and *Thnak Ek*.⁵²

In July of 2016, I conducted a group interview with ten students who attended Lolei Pagoda outside of Siem Reap. The ages of the students were from eleven to seventeen years old, and they lived at the pagoda for two to four years. All of the students chose Buddhist education because they originally came from the countryside and believed that the monastic life would offer better opportunities. Through the help of donations from the community, the students were able to receive free food, education, housing, and training in advanced study of Buddhism with monks. Even though the students lived full-time at the pagoda, the boys were able to stay in contact with their families by visiting home on Khmer holidays.

During an average day, the students were expected to wake up and be ready by five o'clock in the morning to accompany the monks to collect food and donations from

49. Ibid., 260.

50. Ibid., 261.

51. Ibid., 262.

52. Ibid., 264.

the community. In the afternoon, the students choose to either attend the local public school or continue at the pagoda to learn their regular subjects for five hours a day. Afterwards, the students spent another one and a half hours to acquire a deeper understanding of Buddhism. For dinner, food was provided but the meal was meager because the pagoda relied solely on contributions from the community in order to feed the monks, the elderly, and the children who stay at the pagoda.

My research at Lolei showed that the grounds and temple were kept clean, foreign teachers and monks gave lessons in outside classrooms, and there was a separate classroom for computers and a library. The children also were permitted to engage in play, which usually meant football or soccer. Compared to the rural villages, the pagoda was more abundant in resources. However, the students expressed their wish for more uniforms and school materials. All of the students appeared to value strongly their education and planned to become teachers, engineers, or monks.

This unique model of Cambodian education has provided an alternative for males of any background to elevate their status and further their studies. Since the establishment of Buddhism in Cambodia, training in Buddhism has remained a pillar of education and provides Cambodians with a traditional grounding in a non-traditional world. But it is not reaction. It has changed in order to adapt to society.

Currently, the modern, public education system has been separated into pre-school education, six years of primary education, three years of lower secondary education, and then higher education.⁵³ Since 1993, the international community and the Cambodian government have recognized the poor quality of Cambodian education and

53. Yasushi Hiroto and Kitamura Yuto, 113.

have adopted some measures to improve it. Policies under the Education for All National Plan 2003-2015 (2003), Education Strategic Plan 2006-2010 (2005), and Education Law (2007) were initiated to create an equal opportunity for all students to attend school, provide scholarships for the underprivileged, create better services, and to provide accountability and transparency to international agencies, such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) or the Asian Development Bank.⁵⁴

The goals for the various policies have proved somewhat effective as attendance to primary schools has increased. Families in rural regions were also permitted to bring children to school without being charged fees, more primary schools were built, parents accepted the idea that both daughters and sons could attend school, and nutrition programs were offered at some institutions.⁵⁵ However, retention in upper level education is low in rural schools. In 2011 to 2012, the average dropout rate for upper secondary school was 19.5 percent for female rural students and 18.9 percent for male rural students. In contrast, those attending upper secondary school in urban areas had only a 5.4 percent drop out for females and an 8.9 percent drop out for males.⁵⁶ The pressures and constraints of family relations tend to determine the future of a child and causes some students to either leave school at an early age or struggle to succeed because of high absences.

However, the government has failed to enhance the quality of education by not providing enough resources and materials, not investing in better training programs for

54. Ibid., 115-116.

55. Ibid., 118.

56. United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization, "Cambodia: Education for All 2015 National Review," (paper presented at the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization, Paris, France, 2015), 31. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002297/229713e.pdf>.

teachers, and not offering better incentives to the staff to reduce high turnover rates. One recent scholarly assessment concluded,

Education reform in Cambodia, which is impeded by the lack of government funds and knowledgeable staff at all levels to cope with changes is driven by political situation and willingness and external condition and globalization. For the monthly salary of teachers at entry level is US\$30, an amount that is not livable by the current living cost. Political will be the key ingredient in education reform.⁵⁷

While the challenges of Cambodia may appear disheartening, some scholars have proposed solutions to improve the welfare of the student. Richard Elmore and Caroline Dyer have claimed that *backwards mapping* could help Cambodian students. This approach first reviews the needs of the society at a lower level to forge a policy at the higher level and argues by understanding needs at the local level, the government can adapt educational programs to address these insufficiencies and thereby build capacity for more advanced education.⁵⁸

For those who pursue a higher education, there are a limited number of public and private institutions in Cambodia. Higher education is classified as the royal academy, a university, or a specialized school.⁵⁹ The educational services of these facilities are sub-par compared to other international establishments. Program curriculums in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEM) fields are not widely available due to low interest. This poses a burden on the country because those graduating with liberal arts or business degrees may not guarantee that Cambodia will progress further or become internationally reputable in STEM fields. Additionally, the groundwork for a competitive research center has yet to be fully initiated by universities due to low

57. Yasushi Hirosato and Kitamura Yuto, 128.

58. Ibid., 150.

59. Ibid., 155.

funding. Only an estimated two percent of the GDP goes towards education and most of the budget is allocated for staff salaries and operations.⁶⁰ Furthermore, just like primary and secondary education, higher educational institutions show a low enrollment for those who are either female or originate from rural districts. In a United Nations study in 2015 called *Education for All* study, covering the period from 2012 to 2013, it was reported that public and private universities had only 38.81 percent and 40.79 percent female enrollment, respectively.⁶¹ Nonetheless, such statistics have not pushed the government to promote higher education more vigorously among under-represented groups in the population. In addition, only .07 percent of the state budget is allocated towards gender equality in education.⁶²

While there has clearly been a record of improvement in education in Cambodia, there remain the challenges of gender inequality, rural and urban inequality, lack of resources and funds, under-trained staff, and political corruption. There is also a desperate need to improve the education of the rural population. The investment in human capital is an imperative for Cambodia to advance and prosper as a nation.

Urban Education

The students who dwell in the city centers live a different life than their rural counterparts. While approximately 21 percent live in urban areas, 79 percent of the population lives within the rural region.⁶³ Student in the urban complexes, such as Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, attend public school and pursue a higher education at a rate

60. Ibid., 158.

61. United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization, "Cambodia: Education for All 2015 National Review," 37.

62. Ibid., 38.

63. Index Mundi, "Cambodia Rural Population," Index Mundi, 2016, accessed July 17, 2016, <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/cambodia/rural-population>.

higher than rural students due to the ease of access and the abundant amount of resources that cities can provide. In 2010, Siem Reap province had 506 primary schools, 78 secondary schools, 19 upper level secondary schools, and six universities.⁶⁴ With technology and the Internet, urban schools can give students a chance to become more interconnected with the outside world. These outlets permit teachers additional modes of learning so that more creative lesson plans can be offered to students. Basic resources such as electricity, water, and toilets are met as well as ample space for classrooms, libraries, playgrounds, and a higher paid staff. In 2012 to 2013, it was found that on a national level, most students in the country go without clean water while attending school. Only 35.2 percent of pre-schools, 59 percent primary schools, 38.7 percent lower secondary schools, and 63.5 percent of upper secondary schools had access to clean water.⁶⁵ Similarly, the same issue can be seen with toilets. Only 24.7 percent of pre-schools, 82.5 percent of primary schools, 63 percent of lower secondary, and 97.9 upper secondary schools have access to lavatories.⁶⁶ Issues such as these are typically addressed by non-government organizations (NGOs) that strive for community development.

Impact of Non-Government Organizations

The impact of non-government organizations began to make a large impression in Cambodia shortly after the Paris Peace Agreements in the 1990's.⁶⁷ The international

64. Council for the Development of Cambodia, "Siem Reap Province," Council for the Development of Cambodia, 2016, accessed September 28, 2016, <http://www.cambodiainvestment.gov.kh/siem-reap-province.html>.

65. United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization., "Cambodia: Education for All 2015 National Review," 44.

66. Ibid., 45.

67. Helena Domashneva, "Ngo's in Cambodia: It's Complicated," The Diplomat, December 3, 2013, accessed November 8, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/ngos-in-cambodia-its-complicated/>.

community recognized the humanitarian need to help rebuild the war-torn country, and many NGOs responded. In 2013, Cambodia had over 3,500 registered NGO's and was ranked internationally as the second highest number of NGO's per capita.⁶⁸

Some of the very first NGOs focused on political order. The government of Cambodia was initially helped by the United Nations to re-stabilize order. Order was necessary for other NGOs that might stress education to function. The United Nations established four pillars of conflict resolution to encourage peace and harmony across society. These four pillars consisted of “security, governance and participation, social and economic well-being, and justice and reconciliation.”⁶⁹ These pillars were designed to create self-sustainability and domestic order. Several types of United Nations agencies oversaw these different governance projects. One agency that faced a challenging task was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which assisted in the repatriation and re-integration of Cambodians who desired to return home after the 1990s.⁷⁰ The UNHCR had great difficulty in locating the families of the refugees and providing the refugees with the ability to find a proper home, maintain a stable income and employment, and transition into a society that was completely broken. The task of education, of course, was secondary to political stability and governance, but it was nonetheless essential to Cambodian order and to Cambodia's future, and once order returned, the non-profits stepped in to help.

Ordinarily, non-profits need approval from governments to set up shop. In Cambodia, this was not the case. Because of the initial existence of a weak political

68. Ibid.

69. Hughes, 54.

70. Ibid., 72.

order and the growth of corruption in Cambodia, NGOs were set up without approval or authorization. This presented a number of problems, which persist to this day. Some so-called NGOs have been known to misguide tourists and donors and reap huge profits by exploiting Cambodians who were vulnerable, particularly children and women. In addition, some economists have argued persuasively that aid dependence hindered the self-development of the population.⁷¹ The government and its citizens, they maintain, fail to learn self-reliance because non-government organizations tend to intervene and manage various aspects of the system, which enables the government and the people to rely on such foreign aid and assistance.

Nonetheless, there were and are many non-profit organizations that have helped with initiatives in urban and rural areas. One in particular called Build Your Future Today was exceptional. Founded by Sedtha Long, Build Your Future Today was a center that has been around since 2006 and has been committed to various community projects within the Siem Reap area. Some of the projects that BFT have focused on include building roads, homes, toilets, overseeing health and nutrition in schools and villages, teaching English, providing job training, and even creating a social enterprise that gave village tours. Local Cambodians contributed to all these efforts. All of the employees at BFT came from different backgrounds and work tirelessly at least six days per week. Some staff members were once monks, former street youth, and degreed graduates. Interview of all of the employees revealed that every one of them had been affected by the Khmer Rouge in some form or another. All the workers chose to work with BFT because it was a great opportunity to create a better future for the country. Consequently,

71. Ibid., 7.

this attitude and the mission of BFT to teach, not to solely dispense aid, permitted it to operate quite efficiently. It is, in effect, a self-managed enterprise run by locals who have extensive knowledge of the surrounding area, the culture, language, and how to interact with the government. By 2016, BFT had earned the trust of the villages by demonstrating a record of commitment and accomplishments that improved the lives of the people.

While BFT does all that it can to make progress, it still has challenges. It has limited resources. International donors and the small village tour venture are the main sources of revenue that BFT relies on. Furthermore, like most NGO's, BFT has difficulty working with the government. Since BFT refuses to participate in bribery, the process of receiving authorizations for activities from various governmental departments can be complicated and lengthy.

Village Teachers and Students

Through the case study of BFT conducted in Siem Reap, my research found that, “the typical countryside teacher grew up in the village, received his education through either a two-year university or with government training, earned a very low salary, and worked in a school with a very limited staff.”⁷² Occasionally, local volunteers who have not been formally trained act as substitute teachers for schools. However, within the last decade, the Royal Government of Cambodia has made it a focus to bring more equal opportunity to female candidates. From 2000 to 2013, the hiring of qualified primary school female teachers has increased by 25.10 percent and male teachers have decreased

72. Marisa Vickers, “Life as a Teacher in Cambodia's Villages,” Krama Wheel, July 29, 2016, accessed March 29, 2017, <https://www.kramawheel.com/blogs/krama-wheel-blog/life-as-a-teacher-in-cambodias-villages>.

by 17.20 percent.⁷³

My research further showed that in the countryside there is a shortage of classroom space. In some cases, two teachers use one classroom simultaneously. In those instances, “half the students must sit in groups that face one wall and learn from one teacher, while the other half of the students face the other wall and learn from another teacher. In some cases, teachers must give lessons outdoors underneath makeshift huts.”⁷⁴ My research also revealed that there is a paucity of staff. In many cases teachers must take on additional roles. The teachers must, “help cook breakfasts and lunches, build structures to improve the schools, search for additional donors and supplies, inquire about the problems in each student’s domestic lives, offer additional tutoring outside normal hours, and even work a second job just to pay their bills.”⁷⁵ Some instructors must also be parents while providing an education to students. One teacher who was interviewed, “had no choice but to bring her baby to class, as she was still breastfeeding and her husband was also a teaching at another school. Because they had limited income, they could not afford childcare or babysitting.”⁷⁶

In the villages, there are generally more primary schools than secondary schools, and the curriculum is quite limited. Subjects such as math, science, and Khmer are taught at villages, but that is about it. For those who live in the village, most people have a low completion rate and are eventually forced to work in the agricultural sector. This is attributed to the fact that,

it is common for children to remain absent from school for days due to severe rain, distance, or the work needs on farms that require many hands

73. Hughes., 12.

74. Marisa Vickers, “Life as a Teacher in Cambodia's Villages.”

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

to assist in the survival of the family. Absences have posed challenges for teachers because not only does the lack of attendance prevent the school from receiving government assistance, but it also hinders the students' ability to grow their knowledge and progress through grade levels.⁷⁷

In fact, a typical class can have students of various ages. Such dilemmas lead students to fall behind in knowledge acquisition and to leave school. Many children, who should be in school are working instead to find food and money for their families. Others who go to school are often sleep deprived because they had to wake up early to help on the farm before traveling by foot for at least an hour to and from school in the severe heat and rain are all subjects that tend to predominate their minds.

During my interviews, students also revealed even darker impediments to education. They discussed domestic abuse, parental suicide, family deaths, untreated illnesses, and other fears. They also informed me that they could inform BFT personnel about such issues and BFT would try to find a solution. For example, when BFT learned that a child of thirteen was living alone, it stepped in and found a home for the child. In another case, BFT learned that an intelligent sixteen-year-old needed a scholarship to continue secondary schooling, and BFT arranged a scholarship. In both cases, BFT could respond to the student's needs and it demonstrated its value not only as a responsive problem solver, but also as a trustworthy counselor for overcoming or at least vetting psychological and physical hindrances to learning.

Other barriers that have been an obstacle to the daily learning environment is access to potable water. There is plenty of water, but it is not usable. It is noted that, "clean water is not only needed for children, but also for the gardens that are planted at the school grounds. The gardens are essential because they can help feed the children

77. Ibid.

and teach the students how to become more self-sufficient in terms of food production and agriculture.”⁷⁸

Then there are other challenges to rural education. When I asked teachers in villages that were located just two hours outside of Siem Reap what they would need to improve their schools, most responded with basic requests that are foundational for any educational institution. It was stated that,

teachers wanted to be able to give to students more supplies and resources such as books, paper, pencils, a playground, a fence, water, and electricity. They also said that it would be a dream to someday have Internet installed in the schools so that students could gain information and become more linked to the outside world.⁷⁹

It became clear to me in my research in the villages that rural teachers are community treasures. It was apparent that,

these individuals chose to be teachers because they truly care about the future of their communities. In the villages, the entire community is embraced as family. While there is a deep bond that flows among everyone, it is the teachers who hold one of the strongest connections to the youth. Those who act as mentors fully understand the past hardships that the previous generations had undergone since the Khmer Rouge and realize that the only outlet to make a direct impact upon future generations is to bring them wisdom, hope, and opportunities.⁸⁰

BFT is aware of the many challenges to rural education and to the special role of teachers in village communities in Cambodia and it is trying to use the village-teacher synergy to improve Cambodian society, but its resources are very limited and clearly the conundrum of rural education has to be solved by the Cambodian government. However, BFT can be a partner and its message of self-improvement and self-reliance would help restore or build anew the character and education that the Cambodian people need to be

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

successful in the modern world.

Conclusion

History has proven that the Khmer people are a resilient group of people. Centuries of war and government oppression have hindered the Cambodian people, but they have survived. To grow and improve life generally, the government must first eliminate corruption. This is not an easy task, and good governance continues to be a challenge in Cambodia. There needs to be more accountability, transparency, open budgets, a clear separation of powers with term limits, a multi-party system with fair democratic elections, and an uncensored media.

Beyond the rule of law and good governance, Cambodia needs education, particularly in rural areas. The investment in human capital should be at forefront of Cambodia's agenda. The theory of *backwards mapping* might be helpful. Although it is a traditional method, the route for a Buddhist education also appears to be a good outlet for those who want to learn the ways of monkhood. In most cases, most who attend a monastic education tend to have a higher chance of pursuing a higher level of learning because the students can have safe access to lodging, food, and support from the community. It is also important that females have equal access to education. Furthermore, there needs to be an emphasis on education in the STEM fields and on the development of universities and research facilities.

Education is a massive issue, and here again the government has the primary responsibility of solving it. However, reliable and trustworthy non-profits can help, particularly when government lacks resources or capacity.

BFT has proven itself to be such a non-profit. Its mission to teach self-reliance is an excellent model to help Cambodia succeed in the twenty-first century.

II. CASE STUDY 2: PHILIPPINES

Introduction

For more than thirty years since the dissolution of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship, the Philippines have continued to pursue stability in all socio-economic sectors. Over the years, the country has faced an extensive amount of corruption, terrorism, separatist movements, human trafficking, natural disasters, poverty, and health problems. Furthermore, the conservation of the environment and quality of life for the Indigenous groups has slowly eroded since the colonial period. While leaders of the Philippines have previously made it an agenda to focus on such issues, non-government organizations and social enterprises have recently stepped in to counterbalance the absence of government intervention. Such programs have proven to alleviate certain problems within the country.

Methodology

In 2016, I made a visit to Paradise Ranch in Pampanga, Philippines to tour the premises and conduct on-site interviews with the founder of the organization and five Indigenous employees who worked for the social enterprise. The founder of the organization could speak fluent English. However, a translator was needed to speak with the employees. Prior to the interview, it was explicitly stated to the interviewees that there was no pressure to answer any of the questions, and the interview could stop at any time if there were any sudden feelings of discomfort.

Although the following questions were simple, the employees at Paradise Ranch gave responses that provided a lot of insight into their thoughts of the future, current concerns, domestic problems, and daily life.

Questions to the Employees

- What was your life like before you received assistance from the organization?
- How did you become affiliated with this organization?
- Since you have received assistance from the organization, do you feel the organization has made an impact in your life? Why or why not?
- What are the daily challenges you face on a daily basis?
- Do you have any future plans or goals you would like to accomplish?
- How can the organization improve?
- Has the government supported or prevented you from obtaining your needs or goals?
- Have external forces been a factor in preventing you from obtaining your needs or goals? This can include (but not limited to) terrorism, warfare, disease, or natural disasters.

Moreover, the founder of the organization explained in detail the challenges of working with the government and the goals to conserve the environment while also using the business to promote to outsiders.

Questions to the Founder

- What is your role with the organization?
- What is your background and education?
- Have you served in any other previous roles with the organization?
- How long have you worked with the organization?
- Why did you choose to work with this organization?
- What are the daily tasks and challenges you face each day?
- What do you feel is the largest impact you have personally made within the organization?
- How does the partnership with the business work?
- How does the partnership with a non-profit help accomplish the organization's goals?
- What failures or challenges has the organization faced?
- What is the future plans of the organization?
- How is the non-profit funded?
- Does the government provide any aid or support for the organization?
- Does the government support or challenge the work of the organization?
- Are there any other external factors the organization has predominantly faced? This can include (but not limited to) terrorism, warfare, disease, or natural disasters.

- If so, how has the organization overcome these external factors?
- How are clients chosen to participate in the benefits offered by the organization?

Due to time constraints, there were limitations regarding the on-site research of Paradise Ranch. However, it must be noted that since my first journey to Paradise Ranch as a visitor in 2006, I have studied the organization and kept abreast of its work. And I must say that it has shown much progress. In the last ten years, the homes of the Indigenous People, who include many tribes such as the Agta, transitioned from living in nipa huts to residing in actual concrete structures. Trees have grown, and the area appears much more lush with flora and fauna. The Agta appear healthier and emotionally happier than when I visited more than a decade earlier.

Overall, the data collected was useful to comprehend what the current situation is, what particular challenges are currently being faced, and what the future may be for the Indigenous People and the environment.

Country Profile With a Focus on Challenges to Education

The Philippines' location is in South-East Asia and lies just south of Taiwan, east of the South China Sea, and northeast of Malaysia and Indonesia. As of 2015, the Philippines possessed a population of 100.98 million.⁸¹ Within the Philippines, Manila is the capital and located on the island of Luzon, which is in the northern region of the country. The Philippines is an archipelago that contains 7,100 islands and has eighty provinces.⁸² The Philippines is a republic formed as a presidential government that is

81. Philippine Statistics Authority, "Highlights of the Philippine Population 2015 Census of Population," Philippine Statistics Authority, May 19, 2016, accessed January 23, 2017,

<https://www.psa.gov.ph/content/highlights-philippine-population-2015-census-population>

82. CIA. "Philippines." *CIA: The World Factbook*. (2014/2015): 588-92, accessed January 23, 2017, <http://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f6h&AN=110394328&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

separated by executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

Most citizens who reside in Philippines are ethnically Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Bisaya, Hiligaynon Ilonggo, Bikol, and Waray. An estimated 82 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, while the second largest religious group are Muslims, who primarily live in Mindanao and comprise an estimated five percent of the population.⁸³ In the past, there has been growing conflict in Mindanao.

The Philippines has a multi-party system. While the Liberal Party is presently the dominant party in power, other parties include the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (Struggle of Filipino Democrats), Lakas ng EDSA-Christian Muslim Democrats, Nacionalista Party, Nationalist People's Coalition, PDP-Laban, People's Reform Party, Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino (Force of the Philippine Masses), and the United Nationalist Alliance.⁸⁴ The national currency is the Philippine peso and the official languages are Tagalog and English. However, there are eight other major dialects that are spoken throughout the nation.⁸⁵ The Philippines is also members of several international organizations, including “the United Nations, ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the World Trade Organization.”⁸⁶

Although the Philippines received its independence from the United States after World War II on July 4, 1946, it soon fell under a brutal dictatorship that lasted from

83. CIA, “Philippines,” *CIA: The World Factbook*, 589.

84. *Ibid.*, 590.

85. *Ibid.*, 589.

86. U.S Department of State, “U.S. Relations With the Philippines,” U.S. Department of State, December 15, 2016, accessed January 23, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2794.htm>.

1965 to 1986. Using a martial law provision that was cited in the 1935 Philippine Constitution for emergencies, President Ferdinand Marcos set up a kleptocratic regime that took absolute control of the country by seizing control of the media and the armed forces. He established a government that was filled with institutional corruption, bribery, nepotism, and oppression.⁸⁷ It was also deeply in debt and unaccountable. As Marcos continued his despotic and corrupt rule, the economy suffered.

Unfortunately, the international community chose to ignore the behavior of the Marcos administration due to geopolitical interests. The United States, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank continued to give the Philippines financial aid because the Philippines provided an optimal location to counter Cold War threats and authoritarian leaders, like Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore.⁸⁸

However, after candidate Benigno Aquino, Jr. was assassinated in 1983, a mass-mobilization of citizens rallied against the Marcos administration for the next three years, and the overthrow of President Marcos was spurred under the People Power Revolution in 1986. With an unexpected turn, the wife of Benigno Aquino, Jr., Corazon Aquino, was democratically elected president despite controversial speculation that Marcos' cronies had attempted to rig the results.⁸⁹ The current leader is President Rodrigo Duterte, who was recently elected in 2016.

87. Maria Elena Rivera-Beckstrom, "On Legality and Dictatorship: The Philippine Case," (presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Unknown, 2009), 1, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=54431127&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

88. Kenji Kushida, "The Political Economy of the Philippines under Marcos," *Greater East Asia* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 120, accessed June 5, 2016, <https://web.stanford.edu/group/sjeaa/journal3/geasia2.pdf>.

89. Philippines Daily Inquirer, "The Nonviolent Revolution," *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, February 19, 2016, accessed June 5, 2016, <http://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pwh&AN=96XFPDI20160219.00120.2&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

The record of weak and corrupt government in independent Philippines has generally been a significant barrier to creating a dynamic and first-world education system. But it was not the only challenge. There was also the infighting and division between Christians and Muslims. The minority Muslim population believes that the government has not treated them fairly. Those from Mindanao have stated that, “the conflict is less about religious differences than about land access and distribution; uneven economic opportunities; and biased law enforcement in favor of Christian migrants.”⁹⁰ These feelings of “haves” versus “have nots” have spurred separatist movements and terrorism throughout the country. Known terrorist organizations include the Abu Sayyaf Group, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Moro National Liberation Front, and the New People’s Army. Among the newest terrorist threats, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, otherwise known as ISIS, has begun to infiltrate the Philippines by recruiting potential members.⁹¹ The sudden increase of Filipinos supporting ISIS has alarmed the international community. The conflict between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines has hampered the development of education across the Philippines.

Another challenge to a solid education system are health problems. In 2015, the World Health Organization declared that the average life expectancy in the Philippines was to be 69 years of age, and for every 1,000 live births, the mortality rate for children under five years of age was 59. For adults, ischemic heart disease, strokes, lower

90. James Eder, “Ethnic differences, Islamic consciousness, and Muslim social integration in the Philippines,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30, no. 3 (2010): 328, accessed February 8, 2017. <http://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ich&AN=ICHA457783&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

91. Anton Chan, “Philippines,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis* 7, no. 1 (January/February 2015): 21, accessed June 3, 2016, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/CTTA-Jan_Feb-2015.pdf.

respiratory infections, diabetes, tuberculosis, and hypertensive heart disease are the top five leading causes of death. Additionally, immunizations for children under one year of age has increased to over 95 percent, 49 percent of the population utilizes contraception, 44 percent of males smoke tobacco, approximately 90 percent have improved drinking water sources, and 70 percent have improved sanitation facilities.⁹² Although the Philippines has made great strides in public health, there are still improvements to be made. Malnutrition and HIV continue to be issues as well as a growing number of deaths due to tuberculosis. Moreover, the availability of clean water and of improved sanitation facilities has not dramatically increased. Then there is the overwhelming problem of drug addiction, which the current government is attempting to address through visceral violence. These issues must be addressed before massive improvement in education can take place.

A further impediment to good education is the Philippines, like most Southeast Asian countries, has a major problem with human trafficking and prostitution because of feckless government, uneven economic opportunities, and lack of access to education. The most vulnerable who get caught up in such illegal activities are Filipino children and women. However, beginning in 2003 the Philippines created the *Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act*, which stipulated that those found guilty of trafficking could receive anywhere from 15 years to life in prison, or be fined up to 5,000,000 Philippine pesos.⁹³ To enforce such a daunting program, the Philippines created two internal agencies to

92. World Health Organization, "Philippines: WHO Statistical Profile," World Health Organization, 2105, accessed February 8, 2017, 1-3, <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/phl.pdf?ua=1>.

93. Commission on Filipinos Overseas, *Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003: Primer on R.a 9208 2nd Edition* (Manila: Office of the President of the Philippines – Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2009), 11, accessed June 20, 2016, <http://www.cfo.gov.ph/pdf/9208percent20Primer2ndEd.pdf>.

monitor human trafficking. The Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking oversees the implementation of the *Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act* and the Task Force Against Human Trafficking provides to victims legal, psychological, and social re-integration support.⁹⁴ In an analytical study in 2014 entitled *Transnational Crime and the Philippines Case: An Assessment of the Implementation of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003*, international critics found that these protective measures were not that effective. In a span of ten years since the act was formalized, 1,902 offenders of trafficking were convicted, but over 1,618 victims older than the age of 18 were discovered within the 2012-year alone.⁹⁵ On the other hand, upon reviewing a more detailed database, the Philippine Statistics Authority found that in 2010 out of the 9,717 cases involving violence against children, zero cases were found as part of child trafficking, six cases consisted of child labor, and twelve cases were subjected to child prostitution. Regarding women, out of 15,169 cases involving violence against women, 1,053 included cases of rape, 160 were of concubinage, and 10,534 were deemed as miscellaneous.⁹⁶

Another problem for education in the Philippines is equality for women. According to the World Bank, statistics showed that in 2014, 55.9 percent of women aged 15 or older were employed and 7.0 percent of females were unemployed. Comparatively, men were 59.7 percent employed and 7.1 percent were unemployed.⁹⁷

94. Ibid., 14-19.

95. Daniel Zamora Bernardo, "Transnational Crime and the Philippines Case: An Assessment of the Implementation of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003," (Kota Kinabalu, Saba: Social Sciences Research ICSSR, 2014), 82-84, accessed June 22, 2016, [https://worldconferences.net/proceedings/icssr2014/toc/papers_icssr2014/ICpercent20029percent20Transnationalpercent20Crimepercent20andpercent20thepercent20Philippinepercent20Casepercent20\(Mr.percent20Danielpercent20Z.percent20Bernardo\).pdf](https://worldconferences.net/proceedings/icssr2014/toc/papers_icssr2014/ICpercent20029percent20Transnationalpercent20Crimepercent20andpercent20thepercent20Philippinepercent20Casepercent20(Mr.percent20Danielpercent20Z.percent20Bernardo).pdf).

96. Philippine Statistics Authority, "Highlights of the Philippine Population 2015 Census of Population."

97. The World Bank, "Philippines: Gender Data Portal," Philippines, 2014, accessed June 22, 2016.

While the labor force participation is fairly close in number, women are still unequal to men. Predominately, men tend to work in areas of hard labor such as agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, construction, retail, and transport. However, the general population of women is finding employment in areas such as agriculture, manufacturing, retail, and in private households.⁹⁸ Yet while men are employed more than women, the average life expectancy of females is much higher. Females are now living 71.8 years compared to men at 64.9 years.⁹⁹

One positive aspect of women being denied equal opportunity in employment was that they were much more focused on receiving an education. Across the board, females from all income levels were higher in literacy and held a higher completion rate in primary school and secondary school.¹⁰⁰ When pursuing a degree at a university level, women and men equally shared interest in fields such as business, education, medical, and math or computer science.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, there is still a large discrepancy when it comes to women making an impact in the public sector. In 2007, the Philippine Statistics Authority revealed that 14,431 elected officials were men, whereas only 3,034 women were selected to be in a public position.¹⁰²

Another barrier to education is a byproduct of the Philippines' weather. They are periodically subjected to typhoons. In November 2013, a powerful typhoon known as *Haiyan* occurred and caused havoc for over 11.5 million individuals, killed 6,000 people, and destroyed over 130,000 homes.¹⁰³ Although the government had one week to

<http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/philippines>.

98. Philippine Statistics Authority, "Highlights of the Philippine Population 2015 Census of Population."

99. The World Bank, "Philippines: Gender Data Portal,"

100. Ibid.

101. Philippine Statistics Authority, "Highlights of the Philippine Population 2015 Census of Population."

102. Ibid.

103. British Broadcasting Channel, "Typhoon Haiyan: Aid in Numbers," British Broadcasting Company,

prepare for the initial impact of the typhoon, there was still a large need for international aid because the process of rebuilding communities and assisting displaced individuals turned out to be long and arduous. In a report made by the Brookings Institution nearly two years after the tragedy, it was clear that the Philippines still had not recovered.

According to Brookings,

17.6 percent of the population felt that life has returned to “normal,” with only 32 percent of households able to cover their basic needs, compared to 83 percent before the typhoon. More than 60 percent of families face difficulties accessing services, with displaced households facing particularly pronounced challenges in some areas.¹⁰⁴

One positive outcome of this tragedy was that the government chose and continues to partner with various external agencies to improve the livelihood of its communities and to develop a better emergency response system. A report in 2016-2017 ranked the Philippines 57th out of 138th countries in worldwide competitiveness.¹⁰⁵ In 2015, foreign direct investment was at 5.835 billion USD compared to 127 million USD in FDI net flows in 1986.¹⁰⁶ The Philippines is one of the largest recipients of foreign aid in Southeast Asia. In 2011, the Philippines received \$2.66 billion from Japan, \$2.185 billion from the World Bank, \$1.16 billion from China, and \$667 million from the Asian Development Bank.¹⁰⁷ While foreign aid and assistance have helped the Philippines

November 14, 2013, accessed July 18, 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-24899006.

104. Angela Sherwood, Megan Bradley, Lorenza Rossi, Rufa Guiam, and Bradley Mellicker, “Resolving Post-Disaster Displacement: Insights from the Philippines After Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda),” The Brookings Institution (June 15, 2015): 1, accessed June 10, 2016.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2015/06/15-philippines-typhoon-haiyan-displacement-solutions>.

105. World Economic Forum, “GCIGlobal Competitiveness Index: The Global Competitiveness Report 2016–2017,” World Economic Forum, 2017, accessed January 23, 2017, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-index/competitiveness-rankings/>

106. The World Bank, “Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current US\$),” The World Bank, 2016, accessed February 1, 2017,

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD?contextual=default&locations=PH>.

107. Mahmoud Kamal Abouraia, “Impact of Foreign Aid in Economic Development of Developing Countries: A Case Study of Philippines,” *European Journal Of Business and Social Sciences* 3, no. 4 (July 2014): 167, accessed February 8, 2017, <http://www.ejbss.com/recent.aspx>

recover economically in the late decades of the twentieth century and early part of the twenty-first century, there has been corruption, which has caused funds to be misappropriated. Issues of bribery, pay-offs, and irregularities in contracts have been discovered.¹⁰⁸ The aid has enabled the government to invest in infrastructure, which led to 5.8 percent of its overall growth in 2015.¹⁰⁹ The growth may or may not augur well for education investment, but it could.

In 2016, the newly elected President Rodrigo Duterte was selected based on the campaign promise of ending the massive drug problem in the Philippines. As part of the rise of sudden populist leaders, President Duterte is considered a renegade and political maverick. Unlike the other candidates, Duterte was not part of the traditional elite who was seen by the masses as corrupt and self-serving. Yet, Duterte's unorthodox behavior has utterly dismayed international audiences. Duterte has "cussed his male opponents, the elite, the Aquino administration, the media, human rights and pro-women activism, Manila's traffic problems, members of the diplomatic corps, and yes, even the pope in this predominantly Catholic nation."¹¹⁰ Duterte had formerly served several terms as Mayor of Davao throughout the years of 1988 to 2016. As Mayor, Duterte had aimed to combat terrorist and drug threats through force. Duterte had proudly claimed that after several years of determination, Davao had become one of the safest cities in the Philippines. Yet, however effective the results may be, critics find Duterte has violated

108. Hyewon Kang, "The Philippines' Absorptive Capacity for Foreign Aid" (discussion Paper Series, Makati City, Philippines, July 2010), accessed February 8, 2017, 33, <http://dirp3.pids.gov.ph/ris/dps/pidsdps1015.pdf>.

109. The World Bank, "Overview," The World Bank, April 15, 2016, accessed June 10, 2016, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/overview>.

110. Ramon Casiple, "The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 38, no. 2 (August 2016), 181, accessed February 10, 2017. <http://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=poh&AN=117520001&site=eds-live&scope=site>

several human rights' laws. Since Duterte's inauguration, thousands have been killed without due process. If the judiciary questioned these overt actions, Duterte threatened to execute martial law.¹¹¹ When the United States reacted in 2016 by denying the Millennium Challenge Corporation's foreign aid grant to the Philippines on the premise that human rights were being grossly abused, Duterte remained undeterred.¹¹² Other international organizations and governments also condemned Duterte's vigilante violence, but he continues to follow this relentless path and seems to be moving the Philippines in the direction of authoritarian regime.

The institutional corruption, nepotism, kleptocracy, violence against the masses, and disrespect for international law are all causes for great concern. Yet the full effect of President Duterte's administration will only become apparent over the next six years. In many ways, though, his regime illustrates the massive problem of education in the Philippines. He is focused on wiping out drug cartels and addiction, and while these are real problems, they are also symptoms of other problems like poverty, exploitation of women and children, lack of preparedness to respond to natural disasters associated with the Philippines' geographic location, geopolitical rivalries, nationalist and religious factions, and the lack of educational opportunities in the rural areas, particularly for the Indigenous People.

111. Human Rights Watch. "Philippines: Duterte Unleashes Rights Calamity: Abusive 'War on Drugs' Kills Thousands." Human Rights Watch, January 12, 2017, accessed February 14, 2017,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/12/philippines-duterte-unleashes-rights-calamity>

112. Gale Cengage Learning, "Duterte's Abusive War On Drugs' Risks Foreign Aid," Gale Cengage Learning, 2016, accessed February 2, 2017,

http://ic.galegroup.com.libproxy.txstate.edu/ic/bic1/NewsDetailsPage/NewsDetailsWindow?disableHighlighting=false&displayGroupName=News&currPage=&scanId=&query=&source=&prodId=BIC1&search_within_results=&p=BIC1&mode=view&catId=&u=t.

History of the Indigenous People in the Philippines

When analyzing how the environment and Indigenous groups came to be what it is today, it is necessary to also understand the past evolution of events. Historically, there have been three major transitional phases that have specifically affected the Philippines approach towards Indigenous People and the environment—the Spanish colonization period, the American imperialism period, and the modern period are all critical moments in the history of the Philippines.

Spanish Colonization Period 1521-1898

Shortly after Magellan encountered the Philippines, the Spanish soon came to colonize the Philippines in 1521. In less than fifty years after several expeditions, the Spanish had full control of the islands by establishing settlements near ports. In prime areas such as Manila, the Spanish had originally hoped to renovate the city so that only the Spanish could reside there.¹¹³ Meanwhile, locals were required to relocate to another vicinity of the island. Additionally, there were other cultural exchanges that occurred over the course of Spanish rule. The Chinese made an impact by sending thousands of traders and artisans to inhabit the Philippines.¹¹⁴ This foreign influx threatened the Spanish colonies. However, relations eased with the Chinese and other invaders as communities grew. Historian Luis Francia summed up the early history by writing, “Until the eighteenth century, the Philippines served mainly as a military outpost, subsidized by grants from Nueva España, or Mexico, the galleon trade, and tribute from the Indigenous trade.”¹¹⁵

113. Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos*. (New York: Overlook Press, 2010), 59.

114. Luis Francia, 61.

115. *Ibid.*, 63.

As the Philippines continued to be managed by the Spanish empire, the Filipinos were forced to conform to European standards. During this period, Franciscan friars were sent to convert the Filipino residents to Christianity.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the Spanish created a system to control the locals. When the Filipinos refused to leave prime land, the Spanish and Franciscan friars would bribe the local elites with homes, official positions, and money. The Filipinos would then be relocated to live in a *barrio*, which were neighborhoods located outside of town.¹¹⁷ Under Spanish rule, schools were also another way to govern the future generation of Filipinos. The friars were primarily responsible for instructing religion, Spanish, and Tagalog. Eventually, the establishment of education also led to several universities opening as early as 1595.¹¹⁸ Over the next three centuries, such activities were the building blocks of Philippine society, including education.

However, in 1898 the United States declared war against Spain after the U.S. Maine naval ship was blown up near Havana, Cuba.¹¹⁹ This gave the United States an excuse to pursue national interests and advance the American empire. By May 1898, the Spanish conceded, and the Philippines had mistakenly assumed that independence had finally arrived.¹²⁰ Emilio Aguinaldo, a Filipino nationalist and the first president of the Philippines, fought against United States control and made the case for freedom. Yet despite President Aguinaldo's efforts, the United States ignored the legitimacy of the Aguinaldo government and on December 10, 1898, the Treaty of Paris declared that

116. John D. Early and Thomas N. Headland, *Population Dynamics of a Philippine Rain Forest People: The San Ildefonso Agta*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 19.

117. Luis Francia, 68.

118. *Ibid.*, 103.

119. *Ibid.*, 137.

120. *Ibid.*, 138.

“Spain would relinquish Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and the Marianas (Guam).”¹²¹ Nevertheless, the Philippine-American War continued under Aguinaldo until 1902, and thousands died in the fight for liberty.¹²²

American Imperialism 1898-1946

Under the control of the United States, tribes and locals were to be “civilized.” The United States regarded the Filipinos as inferior and labeled them as “little brown brothers.”¹²³ This derogatory notion of Filipinos perhaps highlighted America’s inner sense of Western superiority. The Americans saw themselves as the civilized big brothers, and used intervention as an excuse to spread Western ideals through education. The United States particularly focused on training the upper class by sending individuals to American universities and later returning those who graduated to the Philippines to assume prominent civic duties.¹²⁴ This trend continued and since it excluded the masses and tribes from reaping the same benefits, particularly in education, it soon led to economic discrepancy and socioeconomic division.

Furthermore, tribal communities were ordered to move to land reservations where the so-called Indigenous People were expected to become farmers and attend schools where they would be taught English and Tagalog.¹²⁵ However, with certain tribes, such a process was not successful. The Agta Negrito people, who lived in the northern island of Luzon of the Philippines, were a case that demonstrated the difficulties in getting some tribal communities to follow the model. Before colonialization, archaeologists speculated

121. Ibid., 141.

122. Ibid., 157.

123. Ibid., 164.

124. Ibid., 165.

125. John. D. Early and Thomas N. Headland, 19.

that the oldest *Homo sapiens* remains were the so-called Tabon Man, who was estimated to have died 47,000 years ago.¹²⁶ Archeologists reasoned that the modern Indigenous Group, the Agta, were descendants of the Tabon Man.

As early as 1912, the Agta were expected to accept the American model of tribal settlement. The United States wanted to train the Agta in the latest agricultural skills and to teach them the common language of the Philippines. However, during this time, the Agta proved to not be very serious about farming, and by the 1960s the Agta were still unable to successfully speak the national languages.¹²⁷ They lacked motivation.

At the beginning of 1942, the Japanese invaded the Philippines during World War II. While central cities, such as Manila, were severely damaged, tribal groups, like the Agta, were relatively undisturbed by the Axis powers. After the Americans defeated the Japanese in 1945, some Japanese soldiers escaped into the Agta forest.¹²⁸ The Japanese initially hoped that rescue forces would arrive in the region. However, stragglers who were not captured by the Americans and who attempted to steal food or supplies were slain by the Agta.¹²⁹ Once the war was concluded, the country began to slowly recover, but the Agta remained aloof and isolated. After the Philippines received official independence in 1946 from the United States, groups such as the Agta continued to be isolated from external influences until the 1960s.¹³⁰

Modern Period

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the Philippines held one of the greatest

126. Luis Francia, 27.

127. John. D. Early and Thomas N. Headland, 19.

128. Ibid., 20.

129. Ibid., 20.

130. Ibid., 20.

rainforest of the world. As harvesting of timber increased, this reality changed.

According to John. D. Early and Thomas N. Headland, “Around the turn of the century observers estimated that 70 percent of the Filipino land area was covered by forests. By 1950, when systematic studies began, this figure had declined to 50 percent. By 1975, it was down to 30 percent, and in 1987 it had reached 24 percent.”¹³¹ By the late 1980s, lumber was one of the top exports of the country, which inevitably destroyed parts of the rainforests and resulted in a loss of biodiversity. In a surprising turn, groups such as the Agta decidedly began to work for the logging industry, because it was a way to receive food and goods. However, the Agta did not foresee what the long-term repercussions would be from deforestation.¹³² Since the extraction business had begun to control the region, the Agta came to lose not just essential resources, but also a sense of tradition and culture. The Agta were hunters and gatherers who slowly evolved into a group that transitioned into modern Filipino society as peasants by working as low-paying wage laborers who lived on landholdings belonging to landlords.¹³³

Additionally, the implementation of controlled fires in rainforests and grasslands have affected the forests. The purpose of forest burning has been used as an ecological tool, economic instrument, and a weapon to control resources.¹³⁴ Indigenous groups, farmers, plantation workers, charcoal producers, and contractors for various reasons have used fire. This technique is today very controversial. Each fire, for whatever purpose, creates some degree of damage to the environment. Scientists argue that those who continually burn logged-over forests or grasslands cause insurmountable ecological

131. *Ibid.*, 35.

132. *Ibid.*, 30.

133. *Ibid.*, 51.

134. *Ibid.*, 189.

damage because the technique creates fuel for a permanent fire hazard, inhibits the regeneration of plants and nutrients destroys micro-organisms, disrupts water drainage that enhances, hydrological effects like flash flooding and soil erosion, damages wildlife, and, finally, hurts soil fertility.¹³⁵ The government has been slow to address the issue of controlled fires. Even though fire prevention laws were in place as early as 1863, fires were destroying the forest by 200,000 hectares a year by the mid-20th century.¹³⁶ Several laws were enacted to impede the rapid depletion of wildlife that fires caused, but the fires continued. According to Early and Headland, this was due to,

1) The inadequacy on the part of the government to deliver the goods and services to the people; 2) logistical problems and lack of interest by the DENR [Department of Energy and Natural Resources,} department; 3) the economic conditions of the upland people; 4) the climatic and biophysical characteristics of forest or grasslands; 5) the immediate impact not being directly felt by local people; and 6) lack of sufficient support from the higher authorities during prosecutions.¹³⁷

Nonetheless, the government, if not fully committed to attenuating controlled fires, was committed to reforestation and the preservation of biodiversity. In the last decades of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century, the government allocated millions of dollars towards the recovery of trees and other biodiversity across the 7,000 plus Philippine islands. In the *Forest Landscape Restoration for Asia Pacific Forests* study that was released in 2016, it was determined that the Philippines has slowly increased the restoration of forests by 0.7 percent.¹³⁸ An important element in this restoration impacted the Indigenous People and here a non-

135. Ibid., 192-196.

136. Ibid., 197.

137. Ibid., 198-199.

138. Center for People and Forests, "Forest Landscape Restoration for Asia-Pacific Forests," Bangkok, Thailand: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and The Center for People and Forests, 2016, accessed June 2016, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5412e.pdf#page=135>

profit called Paradise Ranch was a key player.

As of 2010, there was an estimated population of 17 million Indigenous People who consisted of 110 groups that reside mostly in the Mindanao and Luzon regions.¹³⁹ These Indigenous and tribal people faced discrimination, poverty, and a short life expectancy. The Philippine government enacted the *Indigenous People's Rights Act in 1997* to protect the tribes and to guarantee that Indigenous People had the right to own ancestral lands and maintain traditional customs that were innate to their culture.¹⁴⁰ Despite these measures, however, the Indigenous People struggled to survive in modernizing Philippines. At the time the Act was established in 1997, the national a tribal member had a 36.8 percent to 52.7 percent chance of surviving into old age.¹⁴¹ Since 1997, these averages have remained constant.

Although the Indigenous People initially wished to uphold traditional customs and beliefs, today they desire to integrate into the modern world, and many Indigenous persons now work in the agricultural sector. Most villages also want to obtain necessities for their families, which include access to healthcare, food security, quality education, and opportunities for better employment. Indigenous persons mainly attend specialized schools that separate Indigenous children from city children, live in areas with low

139. United Nations Development Programme, *Fast Facts Lagom: Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines*, (Pasay City: United Nations Development Programme, 2010), <http://www.ph.undp.org/content/dam/philippines/docs/Governance/fastFacts6percent20percent20Indigenouspercent20Peoplespercent20inpercent20thepercent20Philippinespercent20revpercent201.5.pdf?download>.

140. World Intellectual Property Organization, "National Commission On Indigenous Peoples Administrative Order No. 1 Series of 1998: Rules and Regulations Implementing Republic Act No. 8371, Otherwise Known as "the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997," (Quezon City: Office of the President National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, 1998) , accessed June 27, 2016, <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ph/ph083en.pdf>.

141. Asian Development Bank, "Indigenous Peoples / Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction," (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2002), accessed July 11, 2016. <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28027/indigenous-peoples-regional.pdf>

infrastructure, and have very limited access to public goods.¹⁴²

Indigenous People have also served a dual role in the community, largely regarded as protectors of nature and the environment. As tribesmen, they have a deep-rooted knowledge of the environment and are expected to ensure the sustainability of the region in which they live. Yet they have found themselves up against modern external forces that aim to exploit the forest for its precious resources. In response, aid agencies have intervened to help the tribes with such problems. However, some of these non-profits have created a dependency that re-shaped the culture of the communities, including the introduction of

Cash crops, individual ownership of imported technologies, class distinctions and indebtedness are on the increase, especially among those who have become more market-oriented or have been thrown into a mix with other ethnolinguistic groups such as many of those in Mindanao.¹⁴³

Other aid agencies have strived to prevent dependency and cultural divisiveness. The United Tribes of Palawan and the Tribal Filipino Apostolate of the Catholic Church are two non-profits that have helped the Batak tribe from Palawan Island “to become more self-sufficient economically and more independent socially, and politically.”¹⁴⁴ This has been accomplished by working to protect the rights of tribes having access to Indigenous lands, preventing outsiders from exploiting resources, and teaching agrarian skills geared to promoting self-reliance.

142. Ibid.

143. Levita Duhaylungsod, “Rethinking Sustainable Development Indigenous Peoples and Resource Use Relations in the Philippines,” *The Philippines Historical and Social Studies* (2001), 618, accessed February 17, 2017, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/22134379-90003803>

144. Leslie E. Sponsel, ed., *Endangered Peoples of Southeast and East Asia: Struggles to Survive and Thrive*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 91-100.

Impact of Non-Government Organizations

The development of effective non-government organizations in the Philippines is of recent origin. After the dictatorship of Marcos, NGOs became highly significant under President Aquino's administration.¹⁴⁵ A major challenge that the Philippines found in the post-dictatorship era was that there was a shallow pool of experienced politicians and leaders because Marcos had destroyed both left and right wing parties.¹⁴⁶ As the Philippines underwent a transition to democracy and a turbulent economic period, there was a need for NGOs to assist in state building, shaping policies, strengthening the community, and ensuring that an authoritarian government did not return. During the Aquino administration, there was an effort to make certain that NGOs focused on government priorities and acted with professionalism and efficiency.¹⁴⁷

In many respects, NGOs from the Aquino period forward were determined to be successful when the NGO showed that it understood the problems of the local community where it worked and set up local leadership that could direct local activities in a constructive way. These types of NGOs also in many instances acted as a check and balance to the government by pressuring the government through public opinion to uphold law, ethics, and equality of all peoples.¹⁴⁸ They also filled in various roles where the government's presence was lacking or absent. For example, when Aquino was settling matters of national debt, the country faced bankruptcy and was unable to provide welfare programs to help impoverished citizens. Although it was not a perfect solution,

145. P N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 237.

146. P N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, 239.

147. *Ibid.*, 240.

148. Robert A. Dible, ed. *Comparative Perspectives On Civil Society*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 65.

NGOs received international grants to help solve this problem by distributing resources to the impoverished.¹⁴⁹ However, since NGO's also acted in opposition towards the government, there was and is an ambivalent relationship between NGOs and the government. While the government recognizes that there is a great need for NGOs, the government tries to repress these organizations when they criticize government abuse and directly challenge the system. This push-and-pull dimension in NGO and government ties has often moved against NGOs and their mission to help citizens.

Paradise Ranch

In the region of Pampanga, Philippines, Clark Air Force Base was created by the United States in World War II because the Philippines were an ideal location due to the island's proximity to Japan. After the war was over and the Philippines had received independence from the Americans, Clark Air Force Base remained a pivotal area of commerce. Nevertheless, when the Mount Pinatubo volcano erupted in 1991 near the provinces of Pampanga, Zambales, and Tarlac, the regions were left devastated as many families, individuals, and Agta were internally displaced.¹⁵⁰ Magma, ash, and mudflow destroyed homes and villages. An estimate of damaged harvests, public infrastructure, and homes amounted to over \$374 million USD. Furthermore, more than 300,000 families were affected by the natural disaster.¹⁵¹ While resettlement programs were initiated with the support of national and international aid, Indigenous Groups, such as the Agta, were left in long-term peril.

149. P N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, 243.

150. Michael Diggles, "The Cataclysmic 1991 Eruption of Mount Pinatubo, Philippines," U.S. Geological Survey, February 28, 2005, accessed March 12, 2017, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/1997/fs113-97/>.

151. Emmanuel M. De Guzman, "Eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines in June 1991." (Asian Disaster Reduction Center, *Unknown*), 3-4, http://www.adrc.asia/publications/recovery_reports/pdf/Pinatubo.pdf.

This is where Paradise Ranch (PR) entered the picture. PR is a social enterprise that concentrates on improving through education and various other services the forest, wildlife, assisting abandoned children, and Indigenous People who reside in Pampanga near Clark Air Force Base. Thirty acres of land was originally bought in 2006 to re-plant trees. However, after the area became stabilized, the organization moved towards ecotourism by converting the area into a site where visitors can tour, camp, enjoy outdoor activities, and become educated on preserving the environment. Most clients include schools, businesses, corporations, churches, families, and individuals. The facility currently has approximately sixty employees, consisting largely of Agta, who were educated about how to maintain the forest and who are paid a livable wage and work fair hours in their maintenance role. Paradise Ranch partners with the non-profits, Philippine Children's Fund of America and Sacobia Integrated People's Cooperative, which help enhance the education and livelihood program for Indigenous People.

While there has been much growth and many challenges for Paradise Ranch, the founder of the organization asserts that its largest challenge is cooperating with the government. The Clark Development Corporation (CDC) is a government agency legalized to "manage the Clark Freeport and Clark Special Economic Zone. It enjoys full autonomy to enter into contracts, grant permits and licenses, build, operate, and regulate utilities."¹⁵² This limits the movement of Paradise Ranch because the organization is unable to promote the business properly due to pressures from the CDC. The CDC claims rights to the land because the land used to be owned by the government before being turned over by the Americans. In 1997, the government, working under President

152. Invest Philippines, "Clark Development Corporation," Invest Philippines, 2017, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://investphilippines.gov.ph/incentives/clark-development-corporation/>.

Fidel Ramos, enacted the *Indigenous People's Rights Act*, which established the land as government preserve. This protection has often caused disputes between the CDC and Paradise Ranch. The law created the Joint Management Agreement, which was to facilitate collaboration between the government and the Indigenous People. This agreement does not recognize the right of non-Indigenous People, which created confusion because there is a section in the law stating that the rights of all individuals should be protected and respected. According to Paradise Ranch, the CDC has not respected its right and position. In fact, the agency has attempted to close Paradise Ranch on a number of occasions over the years on the premise that it is not a recognized entity. Paradise Ranch continues to worry about this constant battle with the CDC, and the government limits the capabilities of Paradise Ranch.

In addition to teach the Indigenous People about maintaining the forest, Paradise Ranch also helps them by building homes, providing food, offering health assistance, and improving the fertility and sustainability of land. During President Aquino's administration, there was an initiative to pay people to plant trees because there was a goal to have five billion new trees planted. By collaborating with the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Paradise Ranch successfully planted 180,000 trees in 2015. Because of this reforestation effort, the region has seen an influx of birds and other wildlife.

Since 2010, Paradise Ranch has hired the Indigenous People regardless of age, gender, or education. Many women tend to work for Paradise Ranch because their husbands have been known to be unreliable. In the *Indigenous People's Rights Act*, the law allows men to marry as many women as possible. This has caused incestual

problems as well as a history of physical and mental abuse towards women and children. Consequently, in most cases, women have been in situations where it is solely up to them to be the breadwinner of the family. On the other hand, while the Indigenous People are slowly integrating into modern lifestyles, the agency known as the National Commission On Indigenous People (NCIP) has placed pressure on natives to continue honoring tradition and culture by wearing loincloths and attending schools that separate Indigenous People from non-Indigenous citizens. The Department of Tourism has also been known to support the NCIP because this will encourage travelers to want to meet a traditional Indigenous person. This has been a divisive issue because opponents accuse the policies of being racist in nature. Those who argue for integration believe that Indigenous People should attend regular schools because there are few Indigenous teachers and students will not be able to break the poverty cycle if they continue to attend remedial places of education that are only dedicated towards Indigenous People. Paradise Ranch wants to demonstrate to outsiders that Indigenous People can do other things.

Interviews with several of the Indigenous employees who worked for Paradise Ranch revealed that they came from a variety of backgrounds. In one case, a young, twenty-two-year-old man showed how PR enhanced his life. He started working to help support the family of which he was a member at the age of fourteen. His first job had him walking at least two kilometers each day to sell fruits and vegetables at the local market. When he learned of a job opportunity at Paradise Ranch, he applied and started in a position that simply cleared weeds. Then he moved on as he learned different skills. Today, he is now a landscape artist, dancer, and entertainer. Three years ago, he fell in love with a woman who was visiting Paradise Ranch and ended up starting a family with

his new wife. Furthermore, he is now able to focus on his passion for dancing and choreographs tribal presentations for the children that visit Paradise Ranch. Although he does not receive support from the government, politicians will provide food during the holidays and even pay 1,000 Philippine pesos to vote on election days. He credits Paradise Ranch for dramatically changing his life for the better.

Other interviewees expressed similar praise for Paradise Ranch. When asked about continuing problem, the list was long and reflected the common challenges for tribal people across the Philippines. These included the need for clean water, good health care, stable families, and access to markets. While the government does provide free healthcare to Indigenous People, its response to emergencies are slow. With all of the women who were interviewed, the husbands had either disappeared, left the marriage to be with another wife, or did not work. However, after working several years with Paradise Ranch as landscape artists, these females have found that their life and the life of their community generally improved. All the mothers recognized that for their children to have a better life, education was the key. Even though some expressed feelings of wanting to give up, they were proud of their accomplishments thus far. As single parents, many of the mothers have worked long enough to be able to build small homes for their families.

While there are still a number of barriers that these workers must overcome, there is a gradual progression in adjusting to contemporary life. Although upholding culture and tradition is an important factor for Indigenous People, keeping families together, ensuring that children are healthy, and having a safe place to live and learn are the predominant concerns for these particular groups. Paradise Ranch identifies these needs

from a bottom-up approach and has actively delved into various sectors to conserve the environment and assist in the lives of the Agta.

Conclusion

In the last hundred years, the Philippines have undergone a series of changes that have shaped what the political climate is today. Internal and external threats have impacted the government to respond in an authoritarian manner. Consequently, this has caused an egregious amount of human rights issues, environmental concerns, socio-economic problems, and a high level of corruption. Furthermore, since the Spanish empire controlled the Philippines under colonial rule, the environment and Indigenous tribes have slowly eroded over time. The disparities of wealth and opportunities for Indigenous People are still quite apparent. Non-profits social enterprises such as Paradise Ranch have demonstrated that by understanding local problems, root causes can be identified and addressed and that the hope of resolving all challenges firmly rests on education. In the Philippines, today, there is both a desire to preserve Indigenous culture, and to ensure the overall quality of life for Indigenous People, and this desire is in part traceable to the work of such entities as Paradise Ranch.

Since NGO's and nonprofits are still a recent concept within the Philippines, the government must take a stronger interest in protecting such endeavors and search for a way to partner with such NGOs and social enterprises in a comprehensive way. The government should offer more resources and educational tools to ensure that the lives of the Indigenous People are enriched and have a hopeful future. It is particularly critical that the physical and cultural environment of the Philippines be protected and that the Indigenous People and groups such as Paradise Ranch remain an essential part of this

mission. It is important, too, as Martijn Bijlsma concluded, that,

Environmental issues should be treated in a nonpolitical manner. Whereas in other policy areas often difficult and potentially conflictive political choices cannot be avoided, environmental issues lend themselves relatively well to being treated in a nonpolitical way. An important advantage of this is that it can make it easier for people, parties, and organizations to participate in environmental activities and to reach decisions. As a result, more is achieved in the areas of the protection, restoration, and improvement of the environment and natural resources. In addition, the experience of former conflictive parties working successfully together on these issues might contribute to the process of national reconciliation.¹⁵³

The nonpolitical nature of environmental education and preservation should lead the government, when it is short of resources, to cooperate with non-profits that have a proven track record of educating Indigenous People, protecting the environment, and improving lives.¹⁵⁴

The Filipinos are a humble race and have certainly endured much since their independence. However, while there has been some progress there is much to be accomplished in a developing society. It is hoped that the Duterte presidency, even though it is quite controversial regarding its war on drugs, will find a way to cooperate with NGOs and non-profit social enterprises, particularly in the area of education and protection of the environment.

153. Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, eds. *Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges*, (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 177.

154. Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, 181.

III. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a non-government organization (NGO) called Build Your Future Today (BFT) in Cambodia and a non-profit social enterprise called Paradise Ranch (PR) in the Philippines. Although both organizations specialized in different matters, the challenge of education was central to each entity and thus becomes a way to compare the effectiveness of the two non-profits and of the challenges that they and the respective governments confront in improving the lives of the people.

The conclusion of this study is that education is essential to the modernization of Cambodia and the Philippines. There are many challenges to education. In both countries, governments must eliminate corruption and begin remedying the many challenges to education by first prioritizing needs and then investing in education, with a special focus on rural communities in Cambodia and on the environment and Indigenous People in the Philippines. The theory of *backwards mapping* may apply to variations of culture as it might be a template that could work in Cambodia or Philippines. It stresses that the government must first understand local needs before it can address countrywide needs. In both countries, the government should offer more resources and educational tools to ensure that the lives of the rural communities and Indigenous People are enriched and have a hopeful future. This study also concludes that non-profits can be quite useful in the education field. The key to effectiveness occurs when the government is short of resources, and NGOs and non-profit social enterprises step in and provide resources and ultimately show success by transferring knowledge and technology to local constituencies who then become self-sustaining enterprises or individuals who no longer need non-profit

assistance. Like BFT and Paradise Ranch, such local enterprises must consider generating other types of revenues to become self-sustainable.

Overall, the current condition for Cambodia and the Philippines is not hopeless. Positive transformations for both countries have occurred. While the transformational process may be slow, organizations such as BFT and Paradise Ranch have demonstrated that even in a span of ten years a strong partnership with government and a positive mission by NGOs can make a huge difference in the quality of life for underprivileged citizens.

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