

## **Local Organization in the Spotlight: San Francisco Organization Leads International Aid Efforts**

On a recent trip to Cambodia, volunteers from Mira Scholars Foundation worked with over 200 students, all of whom have benefit from Mira's commitment to their education and well-being.

Mira's founder, Sara Ortega said, "We were there soon after the New Year, a time when people in the Bay Area brush the holiday dust off their sweaters and come into work with fresh new ideas; companies start ramping up for their new campaigns; and the overall sentiment is new beginnings. On our annual trip out there, we were simply jumping more deeply into what Mira has always set out to do but make it better and more meaningful. Mira is here really just to provide a solid, decent, and healthy learning environment so that any student, all students, get the chance to be normal kids and grow up in a safe environment."

Ms. Ortega started this non-profit organization at the end of 2009 after working in other countries with students of all ages from preschool through graduate school. She notes, "The global need for help in education is massive, and once anyone becomes a witness to how most of the world lives -- that is, outside the U.S. -- I think we have a responsibility to stand up and do something. Mira Scholars Foundation was at first my small way of doing something that I had the capacity to do as one person. But over time, because of devoted volunteers and Board members, it's growing and growing and growing."

Over 150 million children in the developing world start school each year but drop out within four years. The lack of education, especially for girls, contributes to long term problems in nutrition, general health, job prospects, family safety, and socio-economic stability.

Ms. Ortega noted, "There is struggle everywhere, it's impossible from what I've seen to compare one country against another. So, what does someone do when you don't know where to start? Just start. I started with Mira, and our growing community of donors and supporters lets us know they're ready to start too."

For more information about Mira, please visit  
[www.mirascholars.org](http://www.mirascholars.org) or email [contact@mirascholars.org](mailto:contact@mirascholars.org)



*Picture of Sara Ortega (back right) with three volunteers from California with the children in a wooden, one-room schoolhouse located in rural Cambodia.*