



Our Story

Why We Do This Work: Meet Linda

Who are we and what connects us to our partnerships? Our Director of Operations Somphavanh “Linda” Cajski explains why after eight years at Partners Asia’s US office, this work is still her calling.



What do you do at Partners Asia?

I’m a jack of all trades! I connect the dots between three areas: finance, the directorship, and programming. I pull everything together and maintain a bird’s eye view of the organization.

What keeps you going?

I am so thrilled to wake up to this job every day. It is my calling. I was born and raised in Vientiane, Laos. I have the lived experience of seeing how development has been done in the past and could be done differently in developing countries. I understand our partners in Southeast Asia from a cultural perspective, and their social and political context. The people we serve look like me, speak some of the same languages I do, and have been through the same things for the past generation. We share the same values, the same joys. I bring this emotional connection to my work. I am not just crunching numbers. I know how \$10,000 can change lives in this part of the world.

What unexpected challenges did 2025 hold for you?

We wake up every day never short of surprises! We need to be agile and flexible. When we started a fundraising campaign to support relief and recovery work after the earthquake in Burma, we received a powerful outside endorsement that led to us getting an unexpected 700 new individual donations. This was a lot to process, but we would never say no to support like this for our partners. We are grateful for everything—we want to be overwhelmed by the funds coming in! It is also so affirming that our core circle of supporters, who know the way we work and whose hearts are connected to the part of the world where we work, are here with us steadily and consistently.

Where is this work headed in the future?

We have a solid system, foundation, and team, but we are still evolving as an organization. Our work used to almost exclusively focus on community development and meeting basic needs, but over the last year, we’ve really pivoted towards emergency response to natural disasters and displacement, given the crises our partners face. We are moving into a lot of humanitarian support. We have to do it, and we encourage more donors to pivot, too, because this is what is needed by our partners. We have to listen to them. The circumstances of the world are changing, and the nature of our work is shifting and moving with it, driven by what local leaders need.

