



ACTION

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Sowing the seeds of a new tomorrow for Cambodia



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Cambodia Action

Registered Name:
Southeast Asian Outreach
UK Charity Number: 293382

GENERAL INFORMATION

Cambodia Action is an evangelical inter-denominational mission and development agency, founded in 1973 by Major Taing Chhirc of the Cambodian Evangelical Church. The object is to promote the Christian faith and relieve poverty and distress among the peoples of Southeast Asia. Work is now solely amongst Cambodians.

Cambodia Action is a member of International Co-operation Cambodia (ICC), Global Connections and the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC).

DONATIONS

We rely on God to meet our needs through gifts. All donations are acknowledged unless otherwise requested. General gifts may be allocated to the greatest need, although donors can indicate a preference. Funds given for a specific appeal will be used for that purpose.

Cheques should be made payable to "Cambodia Action" and sent to the Yate Office.

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 CambodiaAction

 @Cambodia_Action

Cambodia Action is working in partnership in Cambodia with a number of local NGOs

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Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7



Dear Friends,

This encouraging scripture was written by Paul during his incarceration, a difficult time for the Apostle, as he awaited sentencing and his fate was in the balance. The world is experiencing a testing time because of the impact of the Corona virus, we have entered into an unprecedented period of uncertainty. Anxiety and fear is running high and as believers we need to reflect and find hope in the words of scripture.

In this edition you will read of some of the impacts this deadly virus has had on individuals and on the Cambodian people. Cambodia has been spared with low infection rates but high social and economic effects, some that will be seen for years to come.

In this edition you will also read of how the team and some of the projects are coping with life during this pandemic.

Cambodia Action has had to make some adjustments, as a number of restrictions were placed on us as a

mission. One example is travel, for the first time in many years I and Board members have been unable to visit Cambodia, but thankfully have been able to receive information and talk to the team and partners about their work via the internet.

We would like to keep you, our readers, better informed so we have created a regular prayer update that you can receive via email. It will give you a small view into what is happening in Cambodia with relevant points to pray. If you would like to receive a copy please write to me and I will add you to the list.

Finally, and most importantly, we want to thank you for the continuous support that each one of you, our valuable partners give, thank you for the notes of encouragement received through the mail, thank you for the prayers offered up to the Lord and thank you for the financial help given to the mission.

Blessings and stay safe.

Chris

Action Magazine & Prayer Update



If you would like to receive a regular Prayer & Praise update, write to us at c.catlin@cambodiaaction.org and we will add you to our list. Also, if you would like to receive our magazine by email, please notify us on the same email address.

>> We say goodbye to Denzil Jarvis



Often in organisations, the people that are on the frontlines are the most sung and perhaps rightly so because they are the arrowhead making headway, advancing the Kingdom of God where it's darkest. However, no arrowhead works without a shaft propelling it forward and my tribute here is to one of the less sung heroes in mission, the board members of mission organisations. In this instance, I refer to Denzil Jarvis, who has faithfully served Cambodia Action as a member of board of trustees for many years. Her commitment to the vision and work of Cambodia Action has far exceeded the duties of a trustee. Her passion and conviction in steering and developing the organisation have created a culture of accountability and excellence in all we do. Her understanding and

compassion in the field have helped bridge the gap between the office in the UK and field staff. The unpredictable events which often cut across good planning in the field didn't distract or discourage Denzil she found a way of making the best use of time and opportunity. Personally, as the ED, Denzil has always supported me well and assisted me greatly in my role to the board of trustees. I pray the Lord bless her greatly in her future.

Chris Catlin- Executive Director

Denzil has been associated with Cambodia Action for longer than I can remember. She was involved in the early pioneering days when plans were being made for us to work within Cambodia before it was actually possible to do so. She was chair of the trustees in her first time serving as a trustee. She re-joined the council again in 2004 and has served as a trustee since then. She has been a faithful committed member of the council ensuring that we operate in a disciplined structured way which has given the mission integrity and credibility before the charity commission.

Denzil's sharpness of thinking and attention to detail has been invaluable in ensuring we operate honourably to both our donors and those we seek to serve in Cambodia. She balanced this with a commitment to take an active role in the projects and team in Cambodia visiting on a regular basis. Jan and I have both appreciated our time working together on trustee visits to Cambodia when trying to determine the way forward as a mission. Above all I have valued her commit-

ment to her Lord which has remained consistent and undimmed through all the circumstances of life whether good or more challenging. We say a big thank you to Denzil for all that she has given so freely to the work of Cambodia Action.

David Adams Chairman of Cambodia Action

I have been privileged to work with Denzil since the early 90s when she was Chair of Trustees and I was an inexperienced member of the team in a very troubled Cambodia. Her wise council and straight-talking in those difficult days was invaluable. As a former Executive Director and now as a Trustee myself, I have appreciated her contribution to the UK governance and strategic planning for the mission over the years. You can always count on Denzil's attention to detail and clear thinking to get you through tough decisions! Her spirit filled faith will be deeply missed on the trustee team, but we trust she will remain a trusted member of the CA family into the future.



Geoff Collett, Board member

Serving with Denzil on the CA board and then as a CA member on the field I found her to be a woman of prayer who is most concerned that God is glorified in all things great and small. She has given years of commitment to Cambodia – a country usually forgotten unless some awful crisis hits the headlines – serving on the Board or visiting workers and Cambodian friends whenever she could. We appreciated the cost and time she expended in visiting Cambodia to show her support and be more aware of the situation on the ground. If what John Wesley said is true - “God does nothing except in response to believing prayer”- we are glad she will continue the work of prayer for Cambodia and Cambodia Action as we step into a future unknown to us but known to the Lord

Zoran Sulc CA team member.

>> Cambodia and Covid -19

The effects on the economy

The Covid-19 infection rate in Cambodia has so far been much lower compared to other countries around the world and for this we thank God. However, the knock-on effect on the Cambodian economy will be long felt, be it in absence of the thousands of tourists that visit the country or the loss of exports for the garment industry. According to News sources, in 2020 the economy will shrink to a growth rate of 2.3% versus 7.1% in 2019. As the virus decreases and confidence builds, tourist may start to return albeit with heavy restrictions.



However, the garment industry employing hundreds of thousands of workers will still suffer long term effects of the disease. Many have had their hours cut, some being suspended whilst others have been retrenched. As a result, they have tried to find other

work around the city or returned to the provinces to live with their already burdened families. Our friends that work among the garment workers report that many of young people that they minister among have left the city with little to no other option other than travel back to where they came from.

In both of these economic sectors it is estimated for every one person employed, two other people benefit through small enterprises. Cambodia's largest job sector is in those businesses that support larger industries. The micro-economy is diverse, be it the lady that cooks cheap

lunches or the street water sellers making a few dollars on hot days. Demand is noticeably dropping as many find life becomes increasingly more difficult.

In times like these it is the poor that are hardest hit, people dependant on selling fruit at a fresh food market or those clever craftsmen trying to sell their goods now that there are no tourists.

Customers are becoming more and more scarce, as people are not

willing to part with hard earned cash except for essentials. This virus has affected everyone across the board with news of even the recycling sector seeing a drop of 60% in what they get for recyclable plastic.

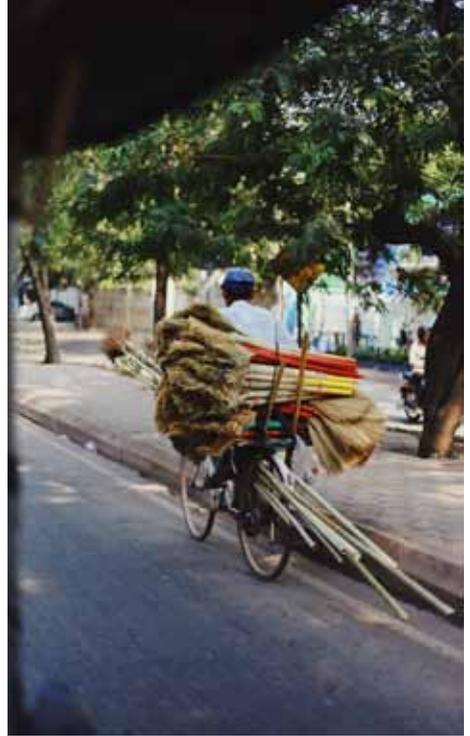
Is life getting back to normal?

During these turbulent times, the Cambodian government had to move quickly to curb the spread of Covid. They brought in restriction in travelling between provinces, the closure of all schools both private and public. Swimming pools, malls, gyms, Karaoke bars, and any other place deemed a high risk were shut down. Food prices were frozen, rice exports were cancelled and international travel through the three airports was curbed. All the land borders with Thailand, Vietnam and Laos including travel by boat were closed until further notice. Public health notices from the government on safety and guidelines were published and enforced as much as possible.

These measures have helped prevent the huge infection rates we have seen around the globe. As of this writing, Cambodia has had a low number of cases, currently standing at 130 infections. Other factor such as the hot weather and the Cambodian lifestyle, with little public transport and most of the time spent outdoors have also been suggested as reasons for the low rates.

Recently and following world trends, the country has started to ease up on some of these restriction. Museums are opening to the public, travel to other provinces has been allowed and negotiations are ongoing with neighbouring countries to open borders for some traders. Thankfully, there have been no reports of violence,

unrest or runs on food supplies at markets. Fuel and electricity supplies also have not been affected.



The Cambodia Action team members that are in the country report that life goes on and all report that they are well, well stocked with food, taking every precaution and limiting travel to the absolutely necessary. People, it seems are able to get on with their lives but normal is still a long way off.

The back page is dedicated to prayer points- please join with us as we work towards life getting back to normal

Chris Catlin

>> Remember Agape - Pray the supply will not fail

We thank God, the Covid pandemic has not killed people in Cambodia but it is killing the economy with large factories closing and small businesses losing customers. In rural Kampong Spue, Herry and Susie Heryanto are praying that the community they've built up at the Agape Rural Handicrafts factory will not suffer.

As well as providing paid work, this business increases the villagers' future employability as they learn new skills, team work, working to standards and handling responsibility. They also benefit from life skills coaching, sports activities, language classes, a saving & credit group, and gospel based teaching in groups and personal mentoring. This is helping to positively change habits and attitudes in this community and bringing some to new or deeper faith in Christ.

Two examples of those being reached:

Somphor is a widow with a wounded heart. She has four children and drinks as an escape from their hopeless situation. One of her daughters has been discipled at Agape and is trying to stand firm in this difficult situation. Agape has given Somphor work so that they can build a relationship with her and help her get free from alcohol.

Sokha is a widow with seven children. She is a tough woman and produces "bancheo" (a local snack) to earn an income. One of her daughters (very young) cycled around the villages to sell these and so didn't go to school. Agape wanted to see Sokha's children getting an education, and so helped build a small shop in front of her house. Her daughter now attends school and her micro-business is growing well.



Lunch at Agape before a bible talk from Cambodia Action workers

Please pray for the following;

- Exciting new plans to increase education provision in this area. Classrooms have been completed.
- Resources to create a futsal court and other sport facilities for vulnerable youth in the area - the place they did use has closed.
- That sales of the mattresses will be maintained to help fund this work.
- That the Agape management team grow in knowing God and commitment to the mission of realising the Kingdom through this social-enterprise.

Report by Herry Heryanto

>> The Sunrise Project - Covid-19 Response

Sometimes it takes an emergency to cause rethinking and new ideas!

At Sunrise, Chhun is our staff member who helps ensure kids are thriving in school, instead of being held back at home to work and contribute to the family income. Child labor is a constant threat for families living on the edge, especially if one or both parents have HIV and struggle with health issues. In most of the families in the Sunrise HIV program, the parents are unskilled laborers and their wages are very low. So Sunrise helps with school fees and materials, as well as visiting to make sure the kids understand and complete homework.

Now that schools are closed due to coronavirus, Chhun is busy making sure that our kids can participate in the government e-school, or continue learning in some other way.

As Cambodia has a nearly non-existent COVID case count, Chhun feels safe as he continues visiting the families and children. Some kids get technical assistance accessing e-school, while others have received phone cards for internet minutes. Still others are asked to visit their teachers at home, and Chhun can monitor their homework assignments as before. But, in our brainstorming, we thought of another way to help them.

Every kid has time for schoolwork and time for play. So Chhun is thinking of productive ways for kids to “play” that engages their creativity and encourages critical thinking.



A magnificent piece of artwork!

His first effort was to make little art journals and distributed them with small packs of coloured pencils. He's asked kids to draw both inside the house and outside. This comes from the western tradition of nature journals. Our next effort will be to give them instructions on making board games, and then how to use those games to practice learning to spell, learning the times tables, and other things kids must memorize in school. Our goal is to find ideas that are cheap and make learning fun.

Upon reflection, we realize this is an idea we can continue, Covid or not, and we can share these resources with other organizations, blessing kids nationwide.

By Susan Smith, Sunrise Project

>> A Panoply of Privilege?

Proliferation of a virus
Panic
Paranoia
Plans amended
Purchasing emergency provisions
Policy checking
(Pandemic insurance!)
Policy writing
(Pandemic responses)
Public prohibitions
Prevention strategies
Personal protection
Planes grounded
Places closed
Physical distancing

These are the concerns and the privileges of the wealthy, along with a plethora of other support mechanisms in my own passport country. They serve as a stark contrast to the reality for the majority of Cambodians.

Social distancing is unachievable when you sleep in large dormitories or work in garment factories or share limited washroom facilities; purchasing more food than just for the next meal is



Making others aware

impossible when you live ‘hand to mouth’; medical intervention is prohibitively expensive; masks and sanitizer gel a luxury; furlough schemes don’t extend this far; and there is no insurance. CV-19 has highlighted the privileged life an “accident of birth” can bring about.

Lord, have mercy....

M’lup Russey staff, despite the potential risk to themselves, have continued throughout this period to seek to minister to the children and young people who do not share my privilege of birth, including providing CV-19 prevention training. The vulnerable have still been rescued, supported, brought comfort, knowledge and understanding within whatever context they found themselves – a privilege of serving others.

There is another privilege that is open to all, irrespective of material wealth or “accident of birth”. It is the privilege of psalms, prayer and the peace of God in the midst of any situation or circumstance. At M’lup Russey we have drawn on this well of perpetual provision as we face CV-19 together. The future is very unclear and potential economic fallout looms ominously on the horizon, but, **‘Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’** Psalm 91 v 1-2

By Sharron Catton.

>> GOOD NEWS

On the 19th of May 2020, the signing ceremony of the new 3-year cooperation agreement between NGOs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation was held in Phnom Pehn. The 7 NGO co-signatories in question have been involved in helping to protect children from human trafficking, child-labour exploitation and sex trafficking for several years.



The ceremony was attended by Mr Min Channy, Director General of the Social Affairs Technical Department, other Government dignitaries and representatives from the different organisations. Mr Channy thanked the NGO's for their invaluable work and encouraged them to continue their work towards achieving the agreed goals. He identified these as helping vulnerable children such as

orphans, abandoned or homeless children or sex-trafficked children. Mr Channy also stressed the importance of organisations working closer together and observing all the guidelines set out by government during the pandemic. We are very proud that one of our long-standing partnering organisations in Cambodia, M'lup Russey, continues as a significant party of this bilateral cooperation agreement. M'lup Russey's dedicated field staff work tirelessly to help many vulnerable families and children. This renewed MoU will continue to underpin the successes of their role and work to support vulnerable children and their families.

Thank you for your continued support every little helps.

The world is feeling the influence of this global pandemic. Mission agencies across the country are reporting a drop in funds, Cambodia Action has not been spared in a down turn in donations. We have looked at ways to cut expenses so that we as a mission can continue serving in Cambodia, however we need your continued prayer and financial support.

To give online via PayPal go to our website at www.cambodiaaction.org

To give via cheque please post your donations to Cambodia Action, 120 Maisemore, Yate, BS37 8UW

The Lord bless you.

Chris Catlin, Executive Director



PRAYER CHANGES EVERYTHING

Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing....

This edition is full of articles concerning the Corona Virus, how some have and are still coping with possible long term damaging effects on Cambodia and its people . Although by the time this magazine is in your hands the world may have experienced further changes, I would like to concentrate on praying for Cambodia, our team members and our partners as well as Cambodia Action as a mission.

Please pray for:

Cambodia and it's people

- The recovering of the Cambodian economy, the borders will open and tourism will return.
- There would be an upswing in the garment industry and that orders would come flooding back to the country
- Those that have lost their jobs would either find good employment or get their jobs back.
- Through this crisis, strong courageous leadership would emerge both in government and in the church - leadership that will benefit all the people.
- Pray that peace and calm would remain in Cambodia - no violence.

Please pray for:

Cambodia Action team and partners

- Some of our team members remained in country and have continued to work with our partners. Pray for protection either from the virus or the effects of the virus.
- All of Cambodia Action's team members are dependent on the gifts from friends and churches, pray that the Lord would continue to provide for them
- Pray for good opportunities to share the love of God with their neighbours and colleagues

Please pray for:

Cambodia Action

- Continued wisdom to the governing board of Cambodia Action.
- Continued finances during this difficult season.



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