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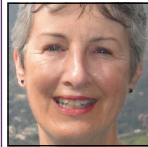
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And the Ride Begins



Kathleen Lauder
 Country Consultant
 Cambodia Team

News from House #81, Street 456 (That's the office.)

The last quarter of the year may be the busiest period for World Renew in Cambodia. Our partners are finishing all of the activities in their annual plan. With the elections and the planting season making it difficult to plan events in our communities from June to September, these last three months have been packed with action.

Baseline Study: As we begin a new five-year plan with our Norwegian partner Mission Alliance, we also prepared a new plan with each of our partners. To monitor results in areas such as governance, health, education, and livelihoods, we need to determine their baselines. We hired consultants to work with us to conduct household surveys and focus groups in 30 of our 95 target communities. They helped us determine the status of our communities in these sectors. The tasks were the focus of both our staff and our partners for several weeks.

Forums: It was exciting to see more than 100 people gather to discuss and debate their mutual concerns relating to the development of their communities. They were local government authorities, police representatives, commune council members (a locally-elected body), and community-based organizations that provide community leadership for the development work we support. The forums pro-



Rains in Cambodia

vide opportunities for open and often animated exchanges about common concerns such as land deeds, birth certificates, death certificates, road construction, and school management.

Signing New Memorandums of Understanding: World Renew has a good relationship with the government of Cambodia. It is essential to our work. We depend on this relationship for visas, driver's licenses, and importing vehicles. We recently signed a new MOU with the government and met with the responsible under-secretary who, pointing to his white i-phone, assured us that he would be available 24/7. We saw this as an opportunity to sign MOUs with our NGO partners. We prepared a detailed code of conduct as a means to seek agreement with our partners and their boards on issues that include conflicts of interest, human resource practices, and professionalism.

Disaster Relief to Flood Victims in Benteay Meanchey: While some of the communities with which we work have had poor harvests this year as a result of drought, other areas of Cambodia had debilitating floods. Rain destroyed crops, flooded homes, and made roads impassable. Many families were without food and



Forum in Oreda



(Continued from page 1)

suffered health risks. World Renew responded to the urgent need expressed by Living Waters Church and distributed rice, salt, and water filters to nearly 300 families in Banteay Meanchey. (See the story of Kong Rum in Sok San Village.)

Office Renovations: Anyone who has lived through a renovation has probably asked the question we are asking in the Cambodia World Renew office: "Will it ever end?" We have had a crew painting the exterior of the building, including all the grill-work, walls, and gates, for most of the last three months. We have updated our 40-year-old toilets and sinks with new ones, replaced some of our interior lighting, covered exposed wires, and hung photos from our communities on the interior walls. It looks SO much better, but it will be nice when the workmen leave us and our workspace is clean and quiet.

Asia Team Meeting in Bangkok and Time with Tom Post:

In late October, World Renew international staff from Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, and Laos met with our team leader, Tom Post, in Bangkok for three days of very useful sharing of information and ideas, and for an enriching one-day workshop on nutrition. After the meeting, Tom Post spent a week with us in Cambodia. It was terrific to draw on his experience and wisdom to

guide our work. It was fascinating to join him in several of our communities to meet with farmers who have participated in our experimental work and explore the impact of replacing chemical fertilizers with 'legumes' to put nitrogen into the soil and improve rice production.



Assessing the impact of green manure on rice production

Kong Rum in Sok San Village A Story of Transformation

Mr. Kong Run is 57 years old. He lives in Sok San village in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. His wife, Phork Chourn, is 56 years old. She looks after her grandchild whose parents migrated to Thailand for work.

Kong Run does not have a regular job. Because his health is poor, he is not able to migrate to look for work. Instead, he works as a hired laborer in the community. Sometimes the money he earns is barely enough to provide his family with rice for the day.

From the end of July until the end of October, Sok San village was repeatedly flooded. As a result, no one was able to hire Kong Run for work. At the same time, his children were sending him less and less money because Thailand was also being flooded.



Run's family suffered from a shortage of food, and sometimes Run could borrow rice from his neighbors. As the floods continued though, his neighbors also ran out of food for their families. Kong Run's family had to manage on just one meal a day.

In October, the flooding became worse, and the community appealed for help. Even government workers could not reach the community because the roads were flooded. Kong Run and Phork Chourn had no idea how they would survive.

Living Water Church, a Christian congregation that World Renew has partnered with to do development work in Sok San Village, appealed to World Renew for help. World Renew staff and members of the Living Water Church made a list of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the village. These families would be eligible to receive a donation of rice. On October 18, 2013, Kong Run met with World Renew staff, the village committee, and Klok Sitha, the community organizer for Living Water Church. Run was given a tag with his name on it that he could use to collect his bag of rice at the distribution point.

The next day, Run woke up early and went to the distribution as planned and received 25 kg of rice, 10 kg of salt, and a water filter. He almost cried when he re-



ceived his supplies, and he could not believe that a church would donate to his family even though he was not a Christian. He walked home with joy, carrying the heavy load down a muddy, flooded road.

Two weeks later Klok Sitha went to visit Run and his family. Kong Run had a smile on his face and told Sitha that "during the flood I did not know how I would sell my labor because the whole village was flooded. I even tried to borrow rice from my neighbors, but they did not have any either. I was anxious and worried. That is why I appreciate so much that Living Water Church and World Renew would consider helping my family with enough food to eat and clean water to drink during this time. The only words I have to say are thank you, and thank you from my heart to all of you."

Prepared by Klok Sitha
Community Organizer
Living Water Church
Banteay Meanchey
Cambodia

The Story of Paulerk Sar:

from Laborer to Pastor to World Renew Program Team Leader

One of the most vivid windows into the heart of Cambodia is through its people. This article tells the story of Paulerk Sar, a humble man with enormous strength and love for his people. We are privileged to have Paulerk serve as the program team leader for World Renew in Cambodia.

When I look at Paulerk, I am often reminded of a young boy. It could be the freckles, the soft smile, or the bit of mischief in his eyes that makes him look so young and innocent. But as you get to know Paulerk and he shares the struggles of his sixty years, you marvel that he has survived. And he has not only survived but faces each day with joy and hope for the future.

Growing up in Phnom Penh: As a young boy Paulerk lived in Phnom Penh. He woke up almost every morning around 2 AM to help his mother buy vegetables from wholesale suppliers at the market. As his mom was busy selling the vegetables to various shops around the city during the day, Paulerk cooked breakfast for his four younger sisters. Always good at sports, Paulerk feels his strong body helped him to survive the difficult years ahead. Before the Khmer Rouge closed all of the universities, Paulerk was among a few privileged youth to study law and economics. He managed to complete his second year in that program before the lives of the Khmer people were upside down.

Surviving Decades of Turmoil: During the time of Pol Pot, when one third of the population of Cambodia died, Paulerk was forced into labor. His usual working day was 18 to 20 hours long. He worked in the fields or did construction. He walked up to 60 kilometers a day at the bidding of his Khmer Rouge masters. His food rations were usually no more than a spoon or two of gruel made from rice and water. It had almost no nutrition. Paulerk slept with other workers in the open air or under a small shelter. He was never sure how many of his fellow workers would wake up

in the morning. He watched many people around him die. He himself was skin and bones, with a high fever, and on the brink of death for extended periods of time.

Paulerk will tell you that the only way he can explain the fact that he survived through the enormous hardships suffered by his people was that the hand of the Lord was on him. He remembers three times when he felt God's protection.

In April 1975, two days before the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh, Paulerk was caught on a street where heavy fire erupted. Guns and bazookas were firing all around him and bullets were whizzing past him. Miraculously he was not touched. In 1977 and 1978 Paulerk was digging a tunnel for the Khmer Rouge close to the Vietnam border. The area was the target of almost daily bombing. But while most of his fellow workers fell, Paulerk survived. In 1990, when Paulerk was helping a friend escape to Thailand, they passed over a minefield and through the crossfire of three warring factions: the Khmer Rouge, the Liberation Army, and the Vietnamese Army. Miraculously, neither the bullets nor the mines touched him and his friend.

Founding the Underground Church in Cambodia: Grateful that his life had been spared, Paulerk felt a clear calling to share his love of Christ with his people. Together, he and three Christian friends founded the underground church in Cambodia. At a time when Christianity was strictly forbidden and travel outside of Cambodia would only be achieved with a government-issued permit, Paulerk led a movement to establish churches throughout the country. Under suspicion from the Pol Pot government, Paulerk was forced to escape to Vietnam for two years in 1984 and '85. There, he continued to network with churches and share his love for Jesus Christ.



Through the grace of God, Paulerk learned to speak English and met with Christians all over the world, travelling extensively through South-east Asia and visiting churches in Europe, Canada, and the U.S.

Developing Communities through NGO Work: Paulerk's extensive international and Cambodian network, his intimate knowledge of communities throughout Cambodia, his English ability, and his leadership skills made him a terrific asset for NGOs in Cambodia.

In 1990 Paulerk started a career working for international Christian NGOs. He worked for Christian Outreach, Food for the Hungry, ZOA, and Church World Service before joining World Renew (then CRWRC) in 2006.

Today Paulerk provides leadership to World Renew's six Program Officers, five NGO partners and eight church partners. His deep understanding of his people is invaluable in ensuring that World Renew is responsive to the needs of the people. His love for the Lord makes him a perfect ambassador to represent World Renew in its mission: *Compelled by God's deep passion for justice and mercy, we join communities around the world to renew hope, reconcile lives, and restore creation.*

What 'Settling In' looks like after Four Months of Life and Work in Cambodia

As a country consultant for World Renew in Cambodia, it seems like I reach new milestones every week. Each milestone makes Phnom Penh feel more like home. If I were to paint a picture of my time here so far, it would look like this:

- Sharing Sunday potluck lunches and devotions after church with a long-established home group. About 15 years ago, mixed Asian and Caucasian couples from International Christian Fellowship, who have chosen to raise their families in Phnom Penh, formed this group. It has become an extended family for their kids, who now have new cousins, aunts, and uncles in their adopted homeland. I feel very lucky to have been accepted into this warm and caring group.
- Getting the hang of the 'art' of driving in traffic in Phnom Penh. Driving here means moving with confidence into any open spot on the road which is generally in the direction you want to go, without running over a dog, moto, bicycle, pedestrian, tuk tuk, or food stall which is sharing the road.
- Welcoming each working day and enjoying the way my relationships with each staff member are deepening.
- Playing the piano for others. I played the piano at the wedding of a young Khmer couple whose mom was a former country consultant in Cambodia. It was a treat to be able to contribute to that event with some classical pieces and a rousing rendition of "Here Comes the Bride." It was a truly beautiful evening that combined Khmer and Christian traditions. It was also fun to accompany a group of carolers who sang Christmas carols by candlelight in the garden of a local restaurant to an audience of about 80 or 100 people.
- Enjoying the beauty and peace of Kep where the good hiking, views of the sea, and the natural tropic beauty are hard to beat.
- Coming home to my apartment which now, with a few little personal touches in place, is the oasis I was hoping to make it.



Prayer Items

- Thanks for the cooler weather in Phnom Penh, which means living with fans instead of air conditioning in my apartment and comfortable temperatures for sleeping.
- Thanks for a visit from my daughter, Lee-lin (19), and friend, Catherine, from Canada over Christmas.
- Thanks for the way the office building is being transformed and updated—and that we will soon not be working in a construction site.
- Prayers for resolution to the political tensions in Cambodia, and for the almost-daily demonstrations to be peaceful. With large groups of citizens gathering and calling out for the prime minister, Hun Sen, to step down, and with the current government refusing to budge on most of the demands of the opposition, it is hard for us to see how peace will prevail.
- Prayers for the 110 participants expected to arrive in Cambodia for the Regional Assembly to be held in Siem Reap from January 27-30, 2014. Please pray that they are enriched by the event. Pray that, through their participation, the lives of the people served by World Renew and Christian Reformed World Missions in Asia are improved.
- Prayers for the visits of the Norwegian Mission Alliance Board and World Renew director and constituency relations team leader in the first week of February. We pray that all of our visitors gain a good understanding of the impact of our work in Cambodia and offer useful insights and ideas to support the staff and our partners in the continual quest to increase the impact of our work on the communities we serve.



Lee-lin enjoying the hammock at Kep Lodge

Giving Idea



Emergency Supplies. Meet urgent needs with blankets, kitchen pots, foodstuffs or soap to help disaster survivors cope. **\$20**

Looking for your Brink or De Graaf news?

Both have now left Cambodia. Please continue to pray for them as they seek God's face for their futures. You will continue to receive updates on the broader work going on in Cambodia, unless you ask to be removed.