



Kratie sunset, courtesy of Eleanor Chapman



**‘I would like the Cambodian people to condemn me to the strictest level of punishment. My life is just one life and cannot compare to those lives which were lost.’**

As this magazine goes to press the last stages of the trial of Kang Kek Ieu (Comrade Deuch) are being played out. He is a Christian brother who in

this world, though forgiven by God, will never escape the enormity of his crimes as leader of the Tuol Sleng extermination camp.

**Pray** for his courage to continue to speak the truth; wisdom for the judges and healing for the lives of the families left behind.

‘For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’.  
Ro 3 v23

### >> Land grab

“**The land is our rice pot,**” a rural villager told a packed hall in Phnom Penh in August. The speaker, Leng Simy, is from a village in western Cambodia. He is one of 300 villagers representing 15,000 people from across the kingdom who came together in a coordinated move to

get the government and international donors to listen to their concerns about evictions and land grabs. The numbers are significant. Organizers said 700,000 hectares of mainly communal land are at risk for this group of petitioners alone.

Amnesty International last year estimated that 150,000 people across Cambodia were at risk

of being forcibly evicted in land grabs generally perpetrated by the politically powerful, the military, rubber and palm oil companies awarded land concessions.

The villagers delivered thumb-printed petitions protesting the land grabs to government ministries, parliament, the prime minister and the national land dispute authority.

# CAMBODIA ACTION



Sowing the seeds of a new tomorrow for Cambodia



**>> MANY CAMBODIAN PEOPLE GROUPS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE BIBLE IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE**



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## 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, the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) and British NGO's for Development (BOND).

## 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 Bawtry Office.

## BANKERS

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Cambodia Action is working in partnership in Cambodia with five other missions as part of International Co-operation Cambodia (ICC)

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Dear Friends,

You may have heard rumours of a new name for SAO Cambodia. After much market surveying, soul-searching and prayer, we have settled on CAMBODIA ACTION. A special thanks to all who contributed in this process.

We hope our re launch under this new name will help us to communicate more clearly our focus on Cambodia and our desire to get involved 'hands on' in God's work fulfilling the unchanged mission to promote the Christian faith and relieve poverty and distress amongst the people of Cambodia.



Ivor Greer and Jonathan Lamb at Keswick

Cambodia has moved forward in leaps and bounds since the first SAO team

## >> EDITORIAL - New Name

arrived in the early '90s. The infrastructure of the country, its economy and the impact of the Christian church have all developed at a fast pace. We in SAO Cambodia, now Cambodia Action, have played a significant part in this, due to the ministry of the many folks who have served through us over those years.

Our origins are at the Keswick convention back in 1973, when Taing Chhirc challenged the British church to support the young and struggling church in war-torn Cambodia. He returned to the country to be martyred by the Khmer Rouge. Since then we maintained links with the convention, more recently with our 30th Anniversary celebrations in which we brought Barnabas Mam, a Cambodian church leader, over to speak.

So we chose Keswick to launch our new name this year. Jonathan Lamb, from the Langham Partnership, spoke at the launch reception and commented on the desires of both organisations, saying, "We are looking

forward to working with Cambodia Action and Cambodian church leaders, to establish ongoing training and support for pastors and lay preachers." So, whilst Cambodia has changed, there remains much to be done. Taing's challenge to support the Cambodian church is more important today than ever before with a rapidly growing body of believers, desperate for mature leadership. Similarly, while a few are benefiting from the better economy, many still live in poverty and the consequences of injustice.

Through the partnership with other missions in International Cooperation Cambodia, we are engaged in work with the ethnic minorities (see the articles in this magazine) and the poor and marginalised around Cambodia. So although our name has changed, our mission remains the same. I trust you will continue to support us as you have so faithfully done in the past.



*Geoff Collett*



Caroline speaks in a local church with the help of Sophor

God first called me to mission when I was visiting missionary friends in Thailand in 1988. During that time I went to see a close friend working in one of the Cambodian refugee camps, little suspecting that 20 years later I would be living in Cambodia myself.

God told me very clearly that he wanted me to go

to Cambodia. It was rather a shock, as Cambodia is very different from France. But when I said yes, God gave me the desire to come, and put a deep burden in my heart for the Cambodian people.

He then started to put the pieces of the jigsaw together. As a result of a throw-away line about Cambodia in a visiting speaker's sermon, I discovered the SAO (now Cambodia Action) Mission Awareness trips.

It then turned out that CA were one of my sending organisation's partners in Cambodia, within ICC. And so I finally arrived on Cambodian soil for the first time in February 2003. I will never forget the trip or the impact it had on me. We fitted a month's worth of activities into 11 days, and in the midst of all the travelling, heat, dust, visits to projects, dust, delicious food, encounters with poverty and suffering, dust, crowded markets, and more dust, I received an excellent over-view of the country, its history and culture, and the suffering that has shaped both people and country. And above all, I fell in love with the people.

It was a six year long uphill battle to get here. But I knew God had called me. As He promised, He opened the door and **What God Opens No Man Can Shut.**

So it was a joy, and somehow fitting, to be involved in the Wycliffe/CA Engage team's visit to Cambodia this July. Things had come full circle, and now I was one of those welcoming the team. And what an encouragement they were, not just for their

wonderful British company and humour. They gave as much as they received and were a huge blessing.

A bonus was the orientation I received through the visits to projects and Khmer churches. The most significant part was visiting Ratanikiri province where I will probably be working next year, helping with linguistic research and translation in one of the many minority languages. It is hard to imagine that some of these people

groups do not have even one book of Scripture in their language.

One thing I had secretly been scared of for many years, was staying overnight in a remote village. This is exactly what we did with the team, following a visit to an evening literacy class in a Brao village. I was delighted to discover that I took to it like a duck takes to water. The forest was our bathroom, our bedroom either a bamboo platform or

hammocks under the village chief's house, and if we'd stayed longer, the river would have been our bath! All to the gentle accompaniment of the night sounds ... crickets, surprisingly loud frogs, strange bird calls, heavy rain, a huge black pig under our 'bed' and, unexpectedly... music blaring out till all hours of the morning, as the village had their weekly party!

God's grace is all-sufficient. It is always there just when we need it, and not before.

**Caroline West** 



### Cambodia Action and Wycliffe UK

both send team members to work within International Cooperation Cambodia. This summer we worked together to send the Engage Cambodia '09 short-term team to visit the linguistic work amongst the minorities and to participate in some of the ICC activities.



Wycliffe/CA Engage Cambodia '09 team. Back row Heather Kennedy, Patricia Findlay, Alistair Collins. Front row, Ruth Spratt, Eleanor Chapman, Geoff Collett and Elizabeth Haggie.

Read on this page how Cambodia Action and Wycliffe worked together to enable Caroline West to serve in Cambodia. Read about the Engage Cambodia team activities on Page 6 and the ICC-RIDE project they visited on Page 8.

Why not visit our **new web site** at [www.CambodiaAction.org](http://www.CambodiaAction.org)

The Engage team articles are reproduced in full, there is regular Cambodian news to read and you can register to receive news and prayer letters by email.

Registered members also have access to resources for fund raising, Cambodian recipes, PowerPoint presentations and posters for downloading.



Ever eaten a fried spider; played parachute games with prisoners, slept in a hammock? These were just a few of the Wycliffe/CA Engage team challenges during our short term trip in July this year!

As we led lessons with youngsters in the ACTS programme and at the Arts ministry school (see page 10), visited and spoke in Khmer churches, attended literacy classes for minorities, we saw and experienced first-hand the many wonderful things that God is doing in this country. Meeting Cambodian Christians was inspiring, because of their generosity, friendliness and love for God. Meeting ICC literacy and language workers opened our eyes to the complexities of translation, and as a linguistics student, really got me excited.

Other images are still vivid in my mind. A young girl in a tattered T-shirt trying

to sell bottled rainwater to tourists; a man with maimed legs begging for money; monks chanting for people who, believing it will bring health and happiness, give them alms;

hardened faces of teenage prisoners who looked old beyond their years. As a visitor with no Khmer and very little knowledge of the culture, I often felt helpless, and that was frustrating. So I think the biggest challenge of the trip still faces me now, and that is 'how should I respond to all I have seen?' Upon reflection, I think the clue is in SAO's name change: **Cambodia ACTION**.

God has demonstrated his love for us through Jesus. It is in Christ that we can find true life and love. Going to Cambodia and seeing such material and spiritual poverty has challenged me to live like I trust in God, to

## Two linguists visit

actively follow Christ and not just say that I do.

I find myself asking, what would happen if I was to live my life in complete faith and trust in God's promises to Christians, and fully rely on the power he gives through the Holy Spirit?

If we all did this what could the implications be for Cambodia? It seems like a country that is still largely in spiritual darkness, despite the rapidly growing church. There is much need. But we know God is at work there, and we know he is mighty, and loves every Cambodian.

So if firstly, we call out to God to build up his church in Cambodia and expand his kingdom, then we commit to praying regularly for Cambodia. What if we give generously to Christian work in Cambodia? **What if we step out of our comfort zone**, and do something to the glory of God for Cambodia?

Maybe start a prayer group, speak in church about Cambodia Action, or go to Cambodia? Then perhaps God will use us as part of the jigsaw to bring healing and restoration.

**Eleanor Chapman**

We visited the ICC office to find out about Bible translation and community development. Being a linguistics student, I was especially interested in this aspect, and enjoyed learning about the different stages of translation. There was a lot more involved than I had realised, and many political issues to overcome, such as the fact that the Khmer script has to be used when creating a writing system for any minority language.

There are about **18-20 minority languages in Cambodia**, and many of them have not got a writing system necessary for education. In order to understand concepts properly,

it is vital that people are able to learn in their native language before using Khmer, the national language.

We went to the **Cambodian Bible Society** and heard about another objective for the creation of a writing system and literacy programmes for these languages, which is to enable the people to have access to the Bible in their heart language and not just a recently learned one.

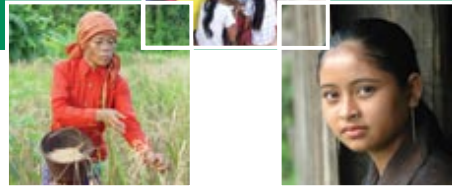
Language and culture are inseparable, and there was a lot of emphasis on making sure that any translation took this in to account, identifying the cultural connotations of any word or phrase. It was great to hear from someone currently involved in the process of Bible translation, and to realise the actual implications of dedicating your whole life to this work. Cambodia is a wonderful country, and I would love to go again! **Elizabeth Haggie**



## WHAT IS ICC-RIDE PROJECT?

ICC – RIDE Project is an integrated development project that works with indigenous communities in Ratanakiri Province to develop bilingual non-formal education and empower these ethnic minorities to provide for their basic physical needs and help strengthen civil society.

RIDE = Ratanakiri Integrated Development & Education



Photos by Ari Vitikainen

## WHAT NEED IS ICC-RIDE PROJECT MEETING?

The mountainous highlands of north-eastern Cambodia are home to over 100,000 ethnic minority peoples who still speak their native indigenous languages, most notably Brao, Tampuan, Krung, Jarai and Bunong.

These minority groups comprise between 3-4% of Cambodia’s population and make up the majority of the population in Ratanakiri Province. In this remote and isolated part of the country, indigenous communities often lack the basic infrastructure and social services found elsewhere in the country, making Ratanakiri one of the least developed provinces in Cambodia.

The future of these communities is also at risk because of the low levels of education amongst these indigenous people, in part the result of not having any written form of language for many years and the continued absence of these native languages within the local education system.

## IN WHAT WAYS DOES ICC-RIDE PROJECT WORK?

ICC has been pioneering literacy and language development in Ratanakiri since 1996. In 1997 this work expanded to include development in the area of community health and, more recently, capacity building - all under the name of ICC – RIDE Project.

ICC – RIDE Project works in several villages in Laak, Eakepheap, Ochum, Taveng Leu and Taveng Kraom communes in Ratanakiri Province. We work with the Krung, Tampuan, Brao and Kavet ethnic minority groups as part of agreements signed with the Government of Cambodia.

In the area of literacy and language development, ICC – RIDE Project has developed teaching resources and trained volunteer teachers to provide bilingual non-formal education to local villagers in both their indigenous language and in the widely spoken Khmer language. These classes, which take place every evening in 19 different villages, focus on increasing basic literacy in both languages along with basic numeracy and everyday life skills.

“I’m very happy that I can read and write, and now I also know how to take care of my family’s health. ICC has also taught us the techniques for planting. My family and I are very thankful to ICC for helping us”.

Woman from Pachon Village

In the area of community health, staff at ICC – RIDE Project focus on community level education and training, which includes providing training to traditional birth attendants in an effort to reduce the number of complications related to childbirth and ensure that mother and child survive the often traumatic birth of a child within the village home. In addition, we also help these villagers look after their health by providing

One way this is done is through awareness-raising within local communities about cross-cutting issues such as land rights, gender rights and other issues raised by the communities themselves.

We are always keen to ensure that our education materials are developed with the input of the local community and that the illustrations and topics we use are relevant to the context of the indigenous people living there. It is just one of the ways in which we seek to involve local people in our work and give them the tools they need to provide for their basic needs, for both today and tomorrow.



nutrition and hygiene training advice along with technical expertise and materials for making water filters and building wells and latrines where they are needed.

In the area of community capacity building, we focus our efforts on strengthening civil society and enhancing the capacity for the indigenous people to make informed choices.

## WHAT ARE THE HOPES OF ICC-RIDE PROJECT?

ICC - RIDE Project has increasingly adopted a village-based approach to community development, equipping local people to define their own development needs and determine the best ways of addressing them.

Our hope for these ethnic minority communities is that they will become increasingly capable and confident of making informed decisions about their future and the changes affecting their livelihoods, language and cultural practices. We long for these tribal groups to make a vital contribution to the overall future of Cambodia.

“Since ICC came to work in the village we have things such as vegetable gardens, rice banks, wells and a school”.

Hoeng Khoeng, Laok Village





The Engage team visited the ICC-RIDE project and give us their reflections.

**R**uth says 'Ratanakiri is the home of the RIDE project. Staff are not only involved with the process of developing a writing system for some of the minorities and teaching literacy, but also helping with practical issues such as health. Great to see how much the RIDE staff really cared, striving to make the lives of the minorities better.'

**A**listair was **A**mazed at the skills of the ICC team. Years of diligent research, checking and rechecking, working with the villagers, leading to the production of alphabets and then booklets recounting local stories, health information and parts of the Bible.

**P**atricia felt **P**rivileged to meet ICC workers on the field and be reminded of their preparedness to be here for as long as it takes to produce a writing system.

**H**eather was struck by **H**health issues the RIDE project was addressing. Expectant mums encouraged to embrace a healthy diet and good care for their children.

**E**lizabeth's best **E**vening was in the literacy class at Ta Veng. It was great to see how enthusiastic all the students were and to have the opportunity to encourage them to achieve.

**E**leanor was **E**xcited by Ratanakiri. Meeting mission staff gave insight into the challenges they face: learning new languages, adjusting to a new culture and raising their own families while trying to help the indigenous people of Ratanakiri.

## A highlight on the very last day

Our last day we were invited by the ICC driver, Thouen and Sophor (ACTS Director), to take part in a service at the Anlong Krogang church which serves the people in one of the relocated slum areas 45 minutes from the centre of Phnom Penh. This turned out for me to be one of the main highlights of the whole trip.

We travelled miles out of the city through the small narrow streets of the slum area and eventually arrived at the church building where we were welcomed by the pastor and four of his sons and their young friends. There was a time of worship where we recognised some of the song tunes in English but others which obviously had a Khmer beat and rhythm to them. Prayer took place with one person leading and gradually became more and

more fervent and loud as the congregation all began to pray at the same time but individually until it all wound up slowly again.

Then it was our turn! We chose to focus on I Corinthians 12 which Sophor read in Khmer before we began. Each of us chose a verse which we felt was relevant in the light of reflecting on our whole trip as a team and what God had taught us about working together as part of the body of Christ and we spoke about each of us having an important part to play whether in music, organising games, crafts, etc. we were all required and should use the gifts God has given us.

We also referred to the fact that God can use even the weakest part – so when we feel inadequate to do a job God gave us strength. Whether we speak English or Khmer, whether we live in the UK or in Cambodia we are all part of the one body. Thouen showed such gratitude for our word of encouragement and our visit. But even more touching was one of the young lads who complemented each of us on the part we had played in the service individually- what an able guy. But what they liked best were our smiles!!!

May God bless Thouen and his family (especially his

wife who was ill that day) and Sophor and their team as they minister to these needy people in that far away place. He certainly blessed us richly by being part of their fellowship for a few hours!

**Patricia Findlay**

The Engage trip was a great success so Wycliffe UK and Cambodia Action will probably do this next year. So if you are thinking of meeting Eleanor's challenge to 'go' then why not get involved with **ENGAGE CMB 10**

Contact Geoff at [g.collett@cambodiaaction.org](mailto:g.collett@cambodiaaction.org)

The Wycliffe UK/Cambodia Action Engage team visited the **Cambodian Christian Arts Ministry** school. They ran a lesson in the school as well as observing the students practising for a



Buntheep (right) and her friend Kanya

dance performance. Many readers will remember Buntheep, one of the CCAM students who toured the UK and was subsequently diagnosed with a brain tumour. We thank God that she is well with the treatment shrinking the tumour dramatically. Pray for her ongoing health and that supplies of the drugs will continue to be available.

