

NEW HOPE CHILDREN'S HOME FARM PROJECT

Earlier this year MSAVLC had a request from New Hope Children's Home in Cambodia to fund a Greenhouse and Farm Equipment Project. For some time the Home has been striving towards self-sufficiency; they farm fish and chickens, grow papaya trees, banana trees, bamboo, green vegetables and rice. The rice is used for food, and they mill the excess rice to sell to people in the surrounding villages. The new venture is to expand their activities by rotavating the land and building a greenhouse, in order to grow more vegetables to sell in the local markets.

The Trustees of MSAVLC were happy to fund the Project, and Cheng Rostitus, the Director of the Home, recently purchased the necessary equipment to build the greenhouse, and he has started ploughing the land.

Since 2015 MSAVLC has also



supported the running of two First Aid Clinics, one at the New Hope Children's Home, the other is in a slum area of Poi Pet. The clinics are

attended by about 60 children; wounds are cleansed and dressed, burns and abscesses treated, and head lice eradicated. The children attending these sessions come from very poor families; there is no hospital nearby and free treatment is otherwise not available.

During the pandemic lockdown life became even harder for these families, and MSAVLC granted emergency funds to them in order to buy essential food supplies and medical necessities.

The Trustees look forward to receiving more news from New Hope when the Greenhouse Project is completed. We wish Rostitus and the children at New Hope every success with their new venture.

(More pictures overleaf)





Above; Harvesting papayas at New Hope Children's Home, in Poipet, Cambodia.

Top right; Essential supplies provided by MSAVLC during lockdown in Poipet.

Below right; A grateful family with New Hope Director, Cheng Rostitus.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

One of the great difficulties that governments around the world have faced in the past eighteen months in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic is the fact that the infection has kept mutating and recurring.

Having coped reasonably well with the SARS epidemic in 2002, the governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia had a head start compared with western governments. All three were much quicker to close their borders to foreign travellers, to enforce quarantine on nationals returning home, and to restrict movement within the country and close schools. So when numbers of cases and deaths from coronavirus spiralled in Britain, Europe and the Americas during 2020, cases and deaths in South-East Asia remained remarkably low.

In February this year we reported in the Bulletin that Vietnam had recorded only 1,551 cases of Covid-19, with only 35 deaths, Cambodia had 460 cases with no deaths and Laos had 44 cases and again no deaths. Whilst border closures, quarantine and restricted movement had a crippling effect upon the people and the economy, the virus

was kept almost completely at bay. Unfortunately, however, it appears that the more virulent Delta strain has crept in to all three countries in the past few months and now appears to be out of control.

In Vietnam, new cases of Covid which were being identified at a rate of fewer than ten per day at the beginning of May, have increased to over 10,000 a day in mid-August. Most are in the south of the country around Ho Chi Minh City. Sadly, deaths have also greatly increased with over 6,000 people dying from the disease in the past two months.

The picture is similar in Cambodia and Laos. In Cambodia new cases were running at a handful per day until the middle of March but they have increased to over 500 per day in recent weeks. Similarly, deaths from covid in Cambodia have risen, but not to the same extent as Vietnam with only 1,700 deaths as of mid-August.

The major difference between the countries appears to be in their vaccination rates. Neither Vietnam, Laos nor Cambodia has the economic power to purchase large stocks of vaccines for their populations, and

each has depended on wealthier countries donating most of their vaccines. Cambodia and Laos were fortunate to receive large consignments from neighbouring China.

In Cambodia over half its 15 million population have received a first dose of vaccine. Laos has vaccinated a quarter of its 7 million population, and has begun stepping up the rate recently.

In contrast Vietnam, with a population of 98 million, was slow off the mark with their procurement of vaccines. Although there have been donations from Japan, Australia, the US and the UK, at present only 1.5% of Vietnam's population have been fully vaccinated and it is feared that many more will succumb to the virus unless strong lockdown measure are taken.

On the positive side, in July Vietnam successfully manufactured a test batch of Russia's Sputnik Vaccine. It is hoped that Vietnam will soon be able to turn around its vaccine shortage and become a vaccine producer.

Peter Lidgard (Editor)

WHEELCHAIRS FOR VIETNAM

Readers may recall that in the November 2020 edition of the Bulletin, MSAVLC was proud to announce that 240 wheelchairs had been provided to VAVA, the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin.

Whilst the wheelchairs had been distributed by local VAVA officials to disabled victims in 13 of Vietnam's 63 provinces, the Trustees were well aware that hundreds more were needed. Many of the second and third generation victims of Agent Orange suffer from lower limb malformations

and are unable to walk, so a wheelchair can give them and their families a newfound freedom.

In February this year, Honorary Secretary Mary Lidgard was contacted by Mr Pham Truong, Director of International Relations at VAVA in Hanoi. Besides thanking the Trustees and all the supporters of MSAVLC, Mr Truong asked if we could provide VAVA with some more wheelchairs. Following discussion by the Trustees, it was decided to send \$35,000 US Dollars to VAVA to buy wheelchairs for distribution by local VAVA

victims associations.

The money was sent in February and 500 wheelchairs were supplied to VAVA headquarters in May. VAVA officers then allocated them to local provincial VAVA associations for distribution to the most needy cases. The map below shows the distribution of the wheelchairs throughout Vietnam.

Overleaf is one of the recipients with her wheelchair in Hanoi. We hope to provide pictures of recipients from the remoter corners of Vietnam in the next Bulletin.

VAVA WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION MAP

PROVINCE

Bak Kan	5
Ha Giang	8
Lao Cai	8
Lai Chau	4
Dien Bien	5
Yen Bai	8
Phu Tho	8
Ha Noi	20
Ha Nam	10
Nam Dinh	10
Nghe An	10

Quang Tri	10
Kon Tum	10
Gia Lia	10
Dak Lak	10
Dak Nong	10
Binh Phuoc	8
Bin Duong	9
Dong Nai	10
An Giang	10
Can Tho	10
Kien Giang	10
Soc Trang	10
Bac Lieu	10
Ca Mau	10



PROVINCE

Tuyen Quang	10
Lang Son	8
Bac Ninh	10
Quang Ninh	10
Vin Phuc	10
Bac Giang	10
Hung Yen	5
Hai Duong	5
Hai Phong	20
Hoa Binh	10
Ha Tinh	10
Quang Binh	10
Da Nang	10
Quang Nam	10
Quang Ngai	10
Binh Dinh	10
Phu Yen	10
Khanh Hoa	10
Ninh Thuan	10
Binh Thuan	10
Ho Chi Minh	15
Long An	10



An Agent Orange victim in Hanoi who recently received a wheelchair, thanks to the generosity of MSAVLC's supporters.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic meant that we were unable to hold our Annual General Meeting last year.

This year the Trustees continue to be cautious. We therefore hope to hold the AGM in Cheltenham, rather than London, and only if it is safe to do so.

The meeting will be held at:
Charlton Kings Club and Institute,
Church Street, Charlton Kings,
Cheltenham, GL53 8AP
on Saturday 16 October 2021
at 2.00 pm.

There is adequate car parking behind the hall.

All supporters of MSAVLC are welcome to attend.

Due to the uncertainties caused by the pandemic, if you hope to attend, please confirm by emailing: marylidgard@hotmail.co.uk by Monday 11th October.

AGENT ORANGE COURT RULING

Following the article in the May Bulletin, unfortunately on the 10th May the French Courts rejected the case brought about by Tran To Nga, to hold companies to account for supplying the toxic herbicide 'Agent Orange' to the American Government during the Vietnam war.

14 multinational agrochemical giants, including Bayer-Monsanto and Dow Chemicals were accused. Agent Orange contained dioxin, one of the most toxic chemicals known to man, and American bombers dropped tens of millions of litres of the defoliant over Vietnam and Laos between 1962 and 1971. Millions of people were affected by this chemical and suffered severe health problems, and millions of dollars were made by the companies who supplied it.

However, the courts stated that 'they had no jurisdiction to judge the wartime activities of the US Government,' and the firms said they could not be held responsible for whatever use the US military made of their product.

A spokesman for Bayer-Monsanto said they welcomed the court's decision and added that they had great sympathy for all those who suffered during the Vietnam war.

However, it is inconceivable to believe that the companies did not know what Agent Orange would be used for, or the devastating effects it could cause!

Ms. Tran said she was disappointed that a crime had not been recognised. She stated that she would appeal against the court's decision.

Her lawyers called the ruling 'astounding' and contested that the ruling was contradicting modern principles of international and national law.

Mary Lidgard

NEW TRUSTEE



We are delighted to announce that Jenny Gold BA, RGN, has recently joined the charity's Board of Trustees. Jenny has been a keen supporter and ambassador of MSAVLC for many years and she will be a valuable member of the Trustees. She will take over responsibility for communication with New Hope Children's Home.

Jenny is a Registered General Nurse who works at present as deputy manager in a busy 74-bed nursing home in the Cotswolds. Her background is in community and general practice nursing. She is also a busy mum to two teenage children, she enjoys walking, cooking, and travel.

DATA PROTECTION.

MSAVLC is committed to making sure that our communications with you are secure, considered and welcomed. We promise to respect any personal data that you share with us, we will keep it safe, and we will not share it with third parties.

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