

# **MORE HELP FOR THE DISABLED IN PURSAT**

At their June meeting, the Trustees of MSAVLC agreed to fund the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Rehabilitation (PQR) Project in Pursat, Cambodia for a further two years, until June 2024.

This project, which is run by the Disability Development Services Program (DDSP) throughout Pursat Province, has been funded by MSAVLC since 2010. It provides vital services to disabled people in an area about the size of Yorkshire.

Cambodia has a high proportion of disabled people due to a number of factors, but in Pursat Province injury from unexploded ordnance, as a result of mines laid during the Pol Pot era, are a major cause. Road accidents, especially from motorbikes, falling from trees, industrial accidents in the timber



industry and strokes are also main contributors to the high incidence

of paraplegia, quadriplegia and severe disability in the province.

The PQR project identifies three main objectives;

- 1) To enable paraplegics, quadriplegics and serious amputees to have adequate health, nutrition and hygiene.
- 2) To enable paraplegics, quadriplegics and serious amputees to access rehabilitation services.
- 3) To provide socio-economic support through income generation activities and socialisation to disabled people and their family members.

DDSP expect to achieve the first objective by providing physiotherapy, counselling and health advice, and giving both support and materials to clients: by conducting assessments and





giving support for emergency responses such as the pandemic, crop failures, household emergencies, etc., and where necessary, providing clean water and sanitation.

Objective 2 will be achieved through training clients and their family members on basic therapy, encouraging them to have regular health checks, and providing and maintaining assistive devices such as wheelchairs and walking aids.

Objective 3 will be reached through peer group meetings, community awareness events, and by resourcing and supporting income generation activities such as barbers, shopkeepers, animal raising, and the like.

Over the next two years, DDSP intends to support over 130 existing clients and their families, the majority who live in remote villages scattered throughout the province. Moreover, in that time they are expecting to



increase their client list by another 10% or so. quadriplegics and serious amputees in Pursat Province, MSAVLC is proud

With no other national or provincial help for paraplegics, humanitarian work. to be a major supporter of this vital

# 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 2021 Annual General Meeting was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, by the kind invitation of H.E. Ambassador Nguyen Hoang Long. The Trustees were pleased to meet Ambassador Long and some of his staff, and to welcome some of our long-term supporters to the meeting.**

The Chairman, Peter Lidgard

opened the meeting and reports were given of the charity's activities, achievements and finances in 2021 by Mary Lidgard, Honorary Secretary and John Firth, Honorary Treasurer.

It had been hoped that in 2021 some of the Trustees would be able to travel to S.E. Asia to visit and evaluate the charity's current projects there, and to visit some related organisations. Unfortunately, due to

the pandemic, this was not possible. However, the Trustees were able to keep in regular contact with all their current project leaders, and regular reports and newsletters were received, all of which had proved to be very satisfactory.

The Trustees were able to continue their work during the pandemic by Skype, email and telephone. During the year, six projects were financially supported and monitored at:—

- All Ears Cambodia.
- The Disability Development Services Program (DDSP) in Pursat., Cambodia.
- Daughters of Cambodia.
- New Hope Children's Home in Poipet, Cambodia.
- The Vietnamese Association for Victims of Agent Orange (VAVA).
- The British Friendship Hospital in Ky Anh, Vietnam.



*His Excellency Ambassador Nguyen Hoang Long (in the red tie), with Trustees and supporters, at the Annual General Meeting at the Vietnamese Embassy.*

The Trustees were extremely grateful at the efficient ways at which these projects were run by the project



managers, and of the work that they do to ensure that the money sent to them is spent in the best possible way. It was heartening to hear of the progress that is being made.

Apart from attending the Trustees' meetings and carrying out their respective roles as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, Peter Lidgard compiled and edited the Bulletin, Mary Lidgard managed all emails sent to the website contact address, and John Firth maintained the charity's mailing list. The other Trustees had their own responsibilities: Lynn Firth was responsible for the distribution of the Bulletin and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations, Susmita Ghosh managed the Facebook page, and Jenny Gold took on responsibility for the sponsored children at New Hope Children's Home.

It was reported that in the spring of 2023, pandemic permitting, Trustees from MSAVLC will be able once again to travel to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, to monitor and evaluate the charity's current projects, and assess any proposals for future funding.

They are particularly keen to visit the Highland Education Development Organisation (HEDO) who run traditional midwife training courses in the highland ethnic minority villages of Vietnam. Since 2003 MSAVLC has funded 17 of these courses, training the midwives in modern practices and health education. Sadly, Professor Trinh, the director of HEDO, passed away in 2019, and the management of HEDO has now changed. The Trustees are keen to meet with the new management committee and, if all is well, hopefully recommence these courses. They are also keen to establish new connections with a project in Laos.

The Treasurer stated that at present, MSAVLC's funds are in a healthy state, but our spending continues to fluctuate year by year, and it is governed largely by the proposals we receive from the projects we support. Some



*Some of the children at New Hope Children's Home in Poipet, Cambodia, pictured with bags of home-grown rice, ready for the winter.*

grants cover a two-year period contributing to the large swings in aid given. Non-project spending remains extremely low, and apart from the cost of producing the Bulletin, other running costs came to just 0.75% of total spend, something the Trustees are

justifiably proud of. It demonstrates the major benefit of having a charity run entirely by volunteers working from their homes, insofar as there are virtually no overheads.

The present Trustees were all willing to stand again and all were duly elected to serve for the next year.

Grateful thanks were given to Peter Ryan who has voluntarily updated our website and has taken over its management, and to Nic Hewlett for examining our financial accounts, free of charge. Huge thanks were also given to all our supporters, friends, donors and fund-raisers, without whom the charity could not continue.

Ambassador Long thanked MSAVLC, on behalf of the people of Vietnam, for the work that they do. He then kindly invited everyone to join him, and the staff at the Embassy, in a Vietnamese buffet supper.

A special mention must be made of one of our long-standing supporters who attended the AGM, at the age of 94 years. He arrived and returned home on his mobility scooter, a two-hour trip each way through London traffic! We are full of admiration for his efforts!

*Mary Lidgard  
Honorary Secretary*



*Former soldier Mr Nguyen Hoang Than, an Agent Orange victim who lives in Dai Cat Village, near Hanoi, in his wheelchair provided by MSAVLC.*



# THANK YOU

"I want to take this chance to say thank you to everyone at Daughters and everyone who supports Daughters. Sometimes, I think to myself, 'What if Daughters of Cambodia didn't exist'? I would not get a second chance, to have a new life, one with a job, security, and skills. I am so grateful. I can't thank you enough when I think about my past, and how my present is so totally different".

SPR



## AGENT ORANGE: THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Mme. Tran To Nga, the 79-year old French woman who suffers from the effects of Agent Orange, is continuing with her fight for justice for Agent Orange victims.

Despite the fact that her claim to the French Court in Evry, near Paris, in May last year was rejected, Tran To Nga is raising money in France for an appeal.

Tran's two daughters have been pleading with their mother to move in with one of them, either to Vietnam or to Australia, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, her health problems and her advanced age. But leaving France is not an option for her. She is adamant she must stay to fight what she calls her last battle.

In March this year she was honoured by VAVA, the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange. VAVA President, General Nguyen Van Rinh presented her with a certificate which 'recognised her merits in fighting for justice for Agent Orange victims.' He said that VAVA will continue to support her in her lawsuit, fighting for Agent Orange sufferers.

The appeal is expected to be heard in September.

## CHALLENGES AT NEW HOPE

It has been a challenging time for New Hope Children's Home over the past couple of years. Just as Cheng Rostitus, the Home's Director, was striving towards becoming self-sufficient, covid struck, and things became more difficult.

Many of the children at the Home contracted covid, thankfully all have now recovered. However just

recently one of them, Rin Sreylin, contacted dengue fever. Dengue is a mosquito-borne tropical viral infection, transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. It causes a wide spectrum of disease ranging from sub-clinical disease to severe flu-like symptoms in those infected. Severe dengue can be life-threatening and often requires care in hospital.

Sreylin was admitted to hospital where she received treatment for dengue. Happily, she has now recovered.

MSAVLC's Trustees were pleased to be able to pay for her hospital fees. She is now well and glad to be home.



Cheng Rostitus with Rin Sreylin in hospital in Poipet.

## 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.

If you no longer want to receive the Bulletin and want to be removed from our mailing list, please contact:

John Firth,  
Honorary Treasurer MSAVLC,  
1 Hillside, Tregunnel Park,  
NEWQUAY  
Cornwall TR7 2AJ.

Or email:  
[msavlc.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:msavlc.treasurer@gmail.com)