



# 545 WHEELCHAIRS FOR VIETNAM'S VICTIMS

The Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) was founded in 2004, to help the victims of Agent Orange.

Agent Orange is the name given to the deadly chemical which was sprayed over Vietnam by the American forces from 1961 to 1971.

More than 80 million litres of poisonous chemicals were used. Most of it was Agent Orange, which contained dioxin. Dioxin is one of the most toxic substances ever produced by mankind, and it causes cancers and many kinds of severe physical and mental disorders. Many of these are incredibly severe and disabling.

It is believed that the chemical enters the genes and is passed on from one generation to the next. It has also entered the food chain via the land and



rivers. Nobody knows exactly how many generations it will affect.

At present approximately three million people in Vietnam are affected by Agent Orange. They are the poorest people in the country. 70% of the families are classified as living below the poverty line, and many are very seriously disabled; 90% are jobless, many are housebound. The burden of

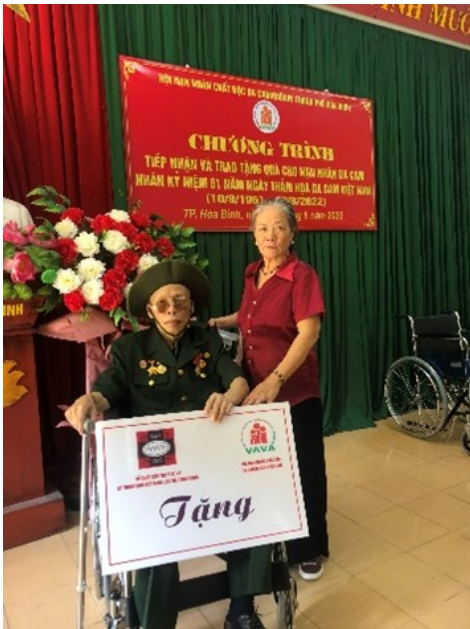
care for these victims falls on their relatives, many of whom are now in their old age.

VAVA does wonderful work giving help to these people in their homes and in rehabilitation centres. They give priority to the poorest families.

MSAVLC has been helping VAVA for many years with funding and provision of wheelchairs and equipment. Trustees have visited many of the victims in their own homes.

When the Trustees asked VAVA how we could help, they were told that providing wheelchairs was the best thing that we could do, as thousands of wheelchairs were needed by victims all over the country. MSAVLC heeded their advice and has recently purchased 545 wheelchairs for Agent Orange victims.





The wheelchairs were delivered to VAVA headquarters in Hanoi, unloaded, stored and then distributed to 37 provinces all over Vietnam.

Each province received between 10 and 30 wheelchairs, and they were given to the most needy. It was a massive undertaking involving a lot of hard work and coordination by VAVA officials, but we are thrilled that we have been able to help so many people. It is heartening to know that the recipients of the wheelchairs will now be able to move about more freely, leave their homes, and integrate into their communities.

We want to thank most sincerely all MSAVLC donors and supporters who have helped to make this possible, and we hope to be able to give more help in the future.



# HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROJECT

**For the past six years MSAVLC has been supporting the Health and Wellness Project which is run by Daughters of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.**

Daughters of Cambodia empowers victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation to escape the horrors of the sex industry and start new lives. They provide skills training, and employment paired with vital health and support services needed to aid their physical, psychological, and social recovery.

To date, they have helped over 800 former sex workers, as a result of their services and interventions.

In September the Trustees of MSAVLC considered a proposal from Daughters' Director, Ruth Elliot, to continue funding the project for a further year.

The Proposal requested funding both for The Medical Program and for the Social Work Services provided by Daughters to their clients.

## **The Medical Program**

Daughters operate a general medical program providing diagnoses, treatment and recovery of health both for their clients and their children, overseen by their own Medical Officer. Well-established medical partnerships mean that much of the treatment is given through external specialist medical service providers. It enables Daughters to provide

uninterrupted medical services to their clients and comprises of the following activities:

**On-site Medical Clinic.** The clinic serves to diagnose and treat basic conditions, to treat general health and infections, and to implement an infection control policy. Medical staff give contraceptive advice and make referrals where needed.

**Specialist Referrals.** Daughters partner with a range of specialist treatment providers, and clients are referred to them for a variety of reasons. These include sexually transmitted diseases, immunisations, treatment of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis, HIV testing and treatment, pre-natal checks, childbirth, contraception, eye and ear conditions, dental treatment, and psychiatric treatment for clients experiencing mental health difficulties.

**Infection Control Policy.** Daughters implement infection control procedures in cases of contagious diseases, to reduce risk of transmission of viruses, including Covid-19. The improvements to overall health as a result of their procedures, nationwide restrictions and education during the Covid-19 pandemic indicates the effectiveness of their infection control measures in prevention of

transmission of contagious diseases.

**STD's.** Clients are regularly educated about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/Aids which are high risk factors in their lives. For, although most clients have stopped engaging in risk-taking sexual behaviour, many have partners who still engage in them, which may jeopardise the client's health.

**Health Education.** Daughters provide their own in-house health education classes for their clients on a range of health-related topics, aimed at preventing medical problems and improving health. Health education workshops thankfully have now resumed following the Covid-19 pandemic as they are crucial to improved health for their clients.

## **The Future**

Ruth and her team have identified six areas which they hope to focus on in the coming year. These are:

**Unsafe Medical Procedures and Substances.** Some of the clients fall prey to unsafe medical procedures and substances (quack medicine) being sold online. Daughters hold workshops for their clients to stop them being scammed by practices which may affect their health and their pockets.

**Energy Drinks.** Daughters are aware that many of their clients consume large amounts of energy drinks which can have an impact upon their monthly budget and on their health. Again, they plan to hold workshops to educate their clients about their dangers.

**Sexually Transmitted Diseases.** As many of Daughters' clients have severe or chronic sexually transmitted diseases, they partner with three local clinics who provide treatment for these diseases. Specialist treatment and prevention advice is financed by the Program.

**Life Skills Workshops.** Workshops are run regularly, encouraging clients to make healthy choices about their lives and those of their children. One of the key features in the program is domestic violence prevention.

**Self-Defence Training.** Given the high incidence of domestic violence and gender-based violence that clients experience, Daughters have begun self-defence training classes. The classes give clients the skills and tools to defend themselves and to exit from violent situations which are all too common in their lives.

Trafficking and sexual exploitation risk factors.  
Safe sex and STDs.  
Trauma.  
Suicide ideation.  
Looking after your Mental Health.

The social work team address cases needing domestic and social interventions or support, with referral to partner agencies for safe-house placements, drug or alcohol rehabilitation, legal services, or services for children at risk.

They also provide food parcels, emergency assistance, and rental payments, for those who are in need or



**Disease Transmission Prevention.** The focus on hygiene and health awareness throughout the Covid-19 pandemic had a positive outcome amongst their clients and in Cambodia as a whole, as it has changed practices. Daughters educate their clients continually on how disease is transmitted, why to practice hygiene, and how to protect their health. As a result, they had very low rates of transmission of Covid-19 at Daughters. They continue to target this with education on disease prevention and hygiene practices, not only for Covid-19 prevention but for improving other areas of

**Social Work Services**

The Social Work Department is integral to Daughters' work, providing psychological recovery and protection for the women and men who need their support. Counselling is provided for issues such as;

- Domestic violence.
- Sexualized behaviours among clients' children due to sexual abuse, rape, or exposure to pornography and witnessing sexual activity.
- Sexual abuse and rape of clients and children.
- Addictions.
- Decision Making.
- Anger and how to handle difficult emotions.

crisis or fleeing domestic violence or other risky situations.

**Funding**

Life is both hard and dangerous for many women and girls (and boys) in and around Phnom Penh. The Trustees believe that Ruth Elliot and her team at Daughters of Cambodia perform an essential function in giving their clients a safe escape from lives of prostitution and sexual exploitation.

It is through the donations given by our supporters that MSAVLC is able to fund Daughters' Health and Wellness Project for a further year, and the full amount that was requested, has already been sent.

# PROGRESS AT NEW HOPE

**For many years MSAVLC has been providing support to New Hope Children's Home in Poipet, Cambodia.**

Over the years we have built a toilet and shower block, supplied toys, beds, furniture, a solar-powered water purifier, mosquito nets, blankets, storage boxes, schoolbags and farming

equipment for the Home. We have also funded a weekly first aid clinic for the Home, given emergency funding during the Covid-19 pandemic and paid hospital bills when children are ill.

MSAVLC has also sponsored some of the children at the Home. However, the bulk of their sponsor

income came through a Coventry-based charity called Global Care. In 2021 Global Care informed us that they felt that their sponsorship program had run its course and that they were withdrawing their aid at the end of the year. They hoped that Rostitus Cheng, the Home's Director would be able to become self-



sufficient and be able to support the children in his care.

MSAVLC has continued to sponsor three of the children at New Hope, and Global Care's responsibility

in monitoring the health and progress of these children has been taken over by the newest member of our Trustees, Jenny Gold RGN.

Recent Bulletins have contained

pictures of the large greenhouse and chicken shed which Rostitus and the children have constructed at the Home and the accompanying photographs give a good idea of the recent success of this project. The Trustees are really impressed with the work that Rostitus and the children have put into the Farm and Greenhouse Project and we wish them every success.

Unfortunately, the latest news from Rostitus is not so good. He says "From April to August there had been no rain and it was feared that the rice was going to die. There are only three months left until harvest time and not much water in the fields"

We can only hope and pray that it rains enough to ensure that their rice harvest is sufficient to feed everyone at New Hope, and that they can grow and harvest their fruit and vegetables to sustain them through the winter.

## FUND-RAISING AT THE ORGANIC FARM SHOP

Over seventy people attended the Curry and Quiz Night at the Organic Farm Shop, Abbey Home Farm, near Cirencester on 21st October. Tickets were hard to come by for this annual event, which had been cancelled both in 2021 and 2020 due to the Covid -19 pandemic.

However, the event was enjoyed by everyone, with a hearty vegetarian curry being served up, along with the usual collection of fun questions and brain-teasers.

The Trustees are most grateful to all the organising committee and to

Dave Smethurst for again nominating MSAVLC as one of the recipients of the funds raised. Thanks are also due to Hilary Chester-Master for allowing them to use the Organic Farm Shop Café.

Besides the Curry and Quiz Night, the second-hand book sales at the Organic Farm Shop are a regular fund-raiser for our charity.

Their recent donation of £107 means that over £200 has now been raised through their book sales. Again the Trustees are most grateful for this ongoing fund-raiser.



### DATA PROTECTION

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