

**VIETNAM
LAOS
CAMBODIA**



**MEDICAL &
SCIENTIFIC AID
NEWS BULLETIN**

www.msavlc.org

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF AID

No. 220

August 2025

Registered Charity 252906

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The charity's Sixtieth Anniversary Celebration and Annual General Meeting took place in Charlton Kings, Cheltenham on 14th June. Chair of Trustees, Peter Lidgard was able to greet both officers and supporters from many distant places to the event. Most notable were our Vice-President, Lord Richard Balfe, who had travelled from Cambridge; Trustees, who had journeyed from Rugby and from Newquay in Cornwall, and supporters who came from various parts of Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire and Bristol. Also attending were former Trustees, Brian Stenson and Deborah Dainton. The guest of honour was Mr Kai Le Duc, former Project Officer and translator for the Highland Education Development Organisation, from Hanoi, Viet Nam.

The Annual General Meeting began with a warm welcome from both the chairman and the Honorary Secretary, Mary Lidgard. Following approval of the 2023 minutes, Mary presented her Annual Report on behalf of the Trustees; the main points are shown below.

Honorary Secretary's Report

"The charity first began with aid to Vietnam during the Vietnam war, and over the next 60 years it expanded to include aid to Cambodia and Laos.

Over the years we have supported a great variety of projects, many of them have reached their natural conclusion, and some due to



Vice-President Lord Richard Balfe speaking at the charity's Annual General Meeting

economic progress, no longer need our assistance. We now focus our support solely on the most deprived and most needy sections of society.

During 2024 financial aid was given to New Hope Children's Home in Cambodia, The Disability Development Services Program in Pursat, Cambodia, All Ears Cambodia, Daughters of Cambodia, The Vietnamese Association for Victims of Agent Orange, The British Friendship Hospital in Ky Anh, Vietnam, and the Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, to assist with medical aid to those suffering from the effects of Typhoon Yagi in Vietnam.

During the year Trustees were in contact regularly with all our project leaders, and we are grateful to them

for supplying us with regular updates, narrative and financial reports and newsletters. All reports were examined carefully by the Trustees, any queries ironed out with the project leaders, and any further funding discussed.

The Trustees held three meetings during 2024, and were in touch regularly by email and telephone.

As well as conducting their respective executive roles, Peter Lidgard compiled and edited the Bulletin, Mary Lidgard liaised regularly with all project directors, and managed all emails sent to the website contact address, and John Firth maintained the charity's mailing list. Lynn Firth was responsible for the distribution of the Bulletin by post and

email each quarter, and for compliance with General Data Protection Regulations. Susmita Ghosh managed the MSAVLC Facebook page. Jenny Gold liaised with New Hope Children's Home for the welfare of our children there.

I must stress that all the Trustees are volunteers and work from their own homes. I would like here to thank them all sincerely for their devotion, dedication and hard work.

The Annual General Meeting was held in London in June and was well attended.

The Bulletin, which is our main source of funding, was published in February, May, August and November and distributed far and wide to all our supporters by email or post.

During 2024 the Vietnamese Ambassador H.E. Nguyen Hoang Long returned to Vietnam as he had completed his three-year posting. We are grateful to him for all the support that he gave to us during his term in office, and we welcome H.E. Do Minh Hung as the new Ambassador of Vietnam. He has already been in contact with us to congratulate us on our work, and we look forward to working with him in the future.

I would here like to thank Nic Hewlett who examines our financial accounts free of charge, and Peter Ryan who manages our website for us, again free of charge. Thanks also to David Smethurst and Fiona Mann who regularly raise money for us from the sale of second-hand books. I would like also to pay a special tribute to Lord Richard Balfe, our Vice-President, for his continued generosity towards the charity

It is the aim of the Trustees to try and visit all of our projects every two or three years. The last visit took place in 2023, and a delegation of Trustees intend to visit again in early 2026. All the charity's current projects will be carefully monitored and evaluated. A full account of this visit will be reported back to Trustees and supporters via the Bulletin, website and social media pages, following the visit.

I would like to finish by giving grateful thanks to all our very generous donors and supporters, without whom we could not continue. My fellow Trustees and I are proud to be able to carry on the invaluable work begun by our predecessors, and we to invite everyone here to join us after the meeting to celebrate 60 years of aid."

Honorary Treasurer's Report

John Firth, the Honorary Treasurer reported that the charity's funds continued to be in a healthy state. Our income had increased compared with 2023, with single donations up 40%. John commented that the increase was almost entirely due to the generosity of one single supporter, and that standing order payments were virtually unchanged. We had received one very generous legacy payment during the year, from the estate of Geoffrey Hill, deceased.

The Honorary Treasurer further reported that interest received had almost doubled compared with 2023, reflecting the increases in global rates, and that overall, our total income excluding legacies, was up by over 12% compared with the previous year.

Project spending in 2024 had increased quite dramatically, due to the size and number of proposals received by the Trustees. Our non-project spending remained very low, at 1.6% of total spending, despite the extra expenses incurred hosting the AGM in London last year.

In conclusion, John remarked that the charity's total assets remain healthy and that the charity remains on a very sound financial footing for many years to come.

Election of Officers and Trustees

The following officers and Trustees were unanimously re-elected by the meeting:

Chair: Peter Lidgard.
Honorary Secretary: Mary Lidgard.
Honorary Treasurer: John Firth.
Trustees: Lynn Firth,
Susmita Ghosh, Jenny Gold.

Honorary President: Dame Judi Dench.
Honorary Vice-Presidents: Lord Richard Balfe and Sir George Howarth.
Medical Advisor: Dr Stewart Benzie.
Legal Advisor: Simon Mumford BA.
Independent Examiner: Nicola Hewlett MAAT.

Thanks

The Chairman, Peter Lidgard thanked the following people for their contributions to the charity:

- Mary Lidgard, for assuring the smooth running of the charity.
- John Firth, for keeping the accounts in good order.
- Nicola Hewlett, for examining the accounts.
- Peter Ryan, for maintaining the charity's website.
- All the Trustees for their hard work



Trustees Susmita Ghosh (centre) and Jenny Gold with Le Duc Khai at the 60th Anniversary Celebration.

during the year.

- All those present for attending the meeting,
- And finally, all our supporters for their generous donations.

Lord Richard Balfe

As the charity's Vice-President, Lord Balfe was then invited to address the meeting.

He said that he was happy to have been associated with the charity for many years, and he congratulated the Trustees for continuing to provide aid to the poorest and most needy people in South-East Asia, for such a sustained period. He recounted that he began taking interest in world affairs at a very young age, and he recalled how proud he was of Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, who defiantly withstood the pressure from the USA to engage in the Vietnam War. He assured us of his continuing support.

60-Years Review

Following the meeting Peter and Mary Lidgard gave an illustrated presentation of the many activities of the charity over the last 60 years.

Refreshments were then enjoyed by all present. The celebration concluded with a toast given by Susmita Ghosh, the charity's longest-serving Trustee. It is printed in full on the back page.

ALL EARS CAMBODIA SPONSORSHIP OF A DOCTOR

ALL EARS CAMBODIA (AEC) is based in Phnom Penh in central Cambodia. It provides primary ear health care, health education and aural rehabilitation to both children and adults, in a country which has a very rudimentary ear and hearing health care service. MSAVLC has been supporting this organisation for many years, with grants for training programmes, in-house clinics, outreach clinics, and equipment. Since 2024 we have been sponsoring a doctor to work in the primary ear care units of the Phnom Penh clinics, plus work at provincial sites, and at outreach levels across Phnom Penh municipality.

Dr. Deth Chamroeun Ratanak graduated from the University of Health Sciences in Phnom Penh in 2019, after studying Medicine there from 2010 to 2017. He has some experience of ENT medicine although full training is being given as part of the AEC Continuing Professional Development program. He is also currently studying part-time for a master's degree in public health at the National Institute of Public Health in Phnom Penh.

His clinical role is demanding and Dr. Ratanak is required to communicate with patients of all ages, children and adults, combining medical knowledge with social skills, patience and compassion. Primary ear health care procedures involve the diagnosis and clinical management of common and treatable ear pathologies. Cases requiring more expert specialist opinion/management are advised regarding onward referral, for example, patients requiring middle ear surgery. The primary ear health care units also encounter cases of irreversible hearing loss, needing in-house referral for audiological assessment and, where indicated, the fitting of hearing aids. The post also provides opportunity for combining clinical work and direct patient care with teaching skills through All Ears Cambodia's Continuing Professional Development program. His weekly schedules typically embrace the following:

- Taking of medical histories and



conducting otology examinations of patients. Diagnosing diseases of the ear and deciding upon and administering effective treatment regimens for ear disorders. Maintaining effective follow-up procedures. Maintaining patient records, hardcopy, and computerized databases.

- In-house referral for diagnostic auditory tests for babies, children, and adults. Interpreting and reporting on test results. In-house referral for aural rehabilitation (hearing aids). Adhering to clinical guidelines and taking part in the development of clinical protocols.
- Communicating with a wide variety of patients and counselling of patients, where indicated. Researching new advances in

otology practice. Teaching and training other healthcare professionals.

- Managing aspects of the primary ear health care service, including monitoring, and improving the quality of service provided and supervising support staff.

Dr Ratanak stated:

“Dear MSAVLC members, thank you so much for your kindness and support. I am very grateful for it and send my wishes to you all in the UK. I am really enjoying my time at All Ears Cambodia. It is such a well-respected NGO and provides such an incredible service. For many, it is the only place Cambodians can go to get help. I am very grateful for the financial contribution you have made in support of my career and role here at AEC. Without your help, I may never have been able to join the organisation and provide the healthcare needed. Your generosity and help have been an inspiration to me. I continue to enjoy all aspects of my job, the clinical work helping patients, and the training and education work to help build the team's capacity and develop their professional skills. So, thank you once again, MSAVLC, for your magnificent support.”

All Ears Cambodia's thoughts on Dr. Ratanak:

“Dr. Ratanak is hardworking and highly trustworthy. At all times he applies honesty and integrity and is



respectful of the people with whom he works. His timekeeping and attendance at AEC are excellent and he frequently puts in extra hours beyond the call of duty. Indeed, Dr. Ratanak's contribution to AEC is proving invaluable. He demonstrates a high level of commitment to his role. And beyond the clinics, he has proved an excellent planner and organizer, creating solutions and driving for completion. He is also an excellent motivator and leader, loyal as well as being caring and respectful. And in turn, Dr. Ratanak is a highly respected member of the team and brings a calmness and clarity to the clinical setting. He is cost-conscious and a good problem-solver. He applies lateral thinking to identify different opportunities and options. Dr. Ratanak has also shown himself to be an excellent teacher. He is articulate and a persuasive communicator. He remains professional at all times and focused on achieving goals."

Glyn Vaughan, Director of AEC commented:

"Thank you, MSAVLC for this kind sponsorship of our latest recruit, our newest otologist. Taking on Dr. Ratanak was one of the best things we did. And your gift is having an immeasurable knock-on effect, not just for the team at AEC, but also for the countless number of patients that he helps. We offer you a huge thank you to everyone in your remarkable team!"

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

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY TOAST

Given by Susmita Ghosh

Today, we mark a truly special occasion — the 60th anniversary of MSAVLC, a charity born out of solidarity, compassion, and a deep commitment to the people of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

It's a beautiful milestone — 60 incredible years of love in action. From humble beginnings to the countless lives touched, every step of this journey has been made possible because of YOU — our unwavering supporters, generous donors, tireless volunteers, and kind-hearted community.

For six decades, with your support, we've helped deliver lifesaving medical aid, vital training, and hope to communities across South-East Asia. From prosthetic limbs to mobile clinics, from scholarships to surgical equipment — every project has been made possible by you, our kind-hearted donors, volunteers, and friends.

Thank you for believing in us, walking beside us, and helping us make the world a little brighter, day by day. Whether you gave time, treasure, or simply a kind word — you are the reason we've come this far.

Thank you for every pound given, every event attended, every kind word shared. You are the heart of our mission.

Here's to six decades of compassion, and to many more filled with purpose, partnership, and possibilities.

Here's to 60 years of healing — and many more to come.

With full hearts and endless gratitude,

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

DAUGHTERS OF CAMBODIA OUTREACH

Ruth Elliot, Founder-Director of Daughters of Cambodia writes:

"We have had 32 new girls come to Daughters so far this year looking for a new job away from the sex industry. Your kind support is making it possible for us to help them start a new life! And they're making great progress, in skills and lifestyle changes.



Most of the new girls are aged between 14 and 19. When we have girls under sixteen we offer them part-time employment, and encourage them to return to school for half-days. We give them support to do so, but we can't force them—it's their choice.

This year we have promoted 23 of the girls to higher workplace skill levels and one of these was promoted to the staff. She said:

'I am very happy that Daughters promoted me to the staff, I am growing in my work skills and leadership skills and I got a salary raise. My feelings are like I scored 10/10. I have a full and happy heart.'

With your donations MSAVLC is able to fully fund Daughters of Cambodia's Health and Wellness project.