

# FOCUS ON MERCY

## SAVING LIVES THROUGH HEALTH CARE

By David Skeat

What's inside...

3

Build East Timor

4

A Cambodian Harvest

6

Atrocities in Burma

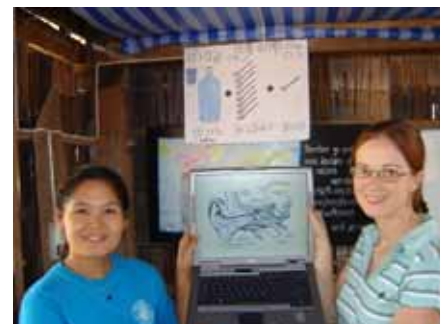
7

Trading With The Enemy

The recent Primary Healthcare Seminar held by ARMS in Thailand was a great success. The four week seminar came about after I had been teaching at the DTS base at *Way Tee Loo* village, close to the Thai / Burma border. On hearing that the facility only ran one training school a year, I challenged the school director to think outside the box. I suggested they run other shorter schools in the facility, such as Primary Health Care, and so the Primary Health Care Seminar was born.

I had for some time been thinking that there was a distinct need to bring in a new level of training for Primary Health Care workers. The health workers we are training through other organizations such as Health Care In Christ, are now trained well beyond what could be called basic health care and are now involved in more complex health issues such as Malaria treatment and prevention, land mine trauma etc.

In my view there was a strong need to train people to come in and take up positions in the provision of basic health care and health education. Our desire was to train refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDP) to do this in a two part course. The initial course four week course would provide basic skills and then six months after that a second course that would provide more complex training. In the time in between graduates would have the opportunity to put all that they had learned into practice in the refugee and IDP camps inside Thailand and Burma.



Nurse Heather Jamieson and translator Pon Dee in the lecture room



The team in Mae-la refugee camp.

Essentially this is what happened, except we also found that people in the villages were also interested in attending the course. So it was that in early March a team of five of us traveled to Thailand to commence the first part of this Primary Health Care Training. On that team were Dr Virginia Keng, (General Practitioner and Community Health Specialist) Heather Jamieson (Pediatric Nurse) Marion Wilbraham (Primary Health Care Worker) Robin Wales (Medical Technologist, and Specialist in Malaria) and David Skeat (Paramedic). There were 24 students on the course.

The team began by doing a health survey of services currently available both in the camps, in the local villages and inside Burma. This helped us to tailor the course to support the local services.



David teaching eye care

Week one was First Aid in which we covered CPR, bites and stings, wound care, burns, lifts and splints, broken bones, infections, eye injuries and rabies. The students enjoyed the teaching, which included role plays which helped them practice what they had learned. On the last day of the lecture week Robin introduced his series on Malaria.

In the second week the team taught on childhood illnesses, worms, ears, respiratory diseases, and dehydration. The students also continued their CPR Practice and wound care role plays.

The third week the team taught on nutrition, child and maternal health, health education and immunization.

The final week covered hygiene and sanitation, pre and post natal care, malaria, and medications. The students were continually tested and assessed through out the four weeks of the seminar. Happily all students passed and were given a certificate of completion.

So as not to confuse the graduates of this course with the already existing primary health care workers who are more highly trained we have given these graduates the title of *Primary Health Care Volunteers*. It is only after they have completed a second course that they will be able to use the title *Primary Health Care Worker*.



In the class room

At the end of the four weeks, the team were all very tired but very pleased with the result. The course finished with a certificate ceremony and traditional Karen meal. The students did some dramas including some very funny impersonations of some of the team members!

We are currently praying about running a second course in early 2007. This course would be the second stage, that would give the new graduates the extra training they need, having spent time using their new skills in the field for a few months. We are also considering running another Phase One course after we have completed the Phase Two training. Please pray for us as we pray and plan ahead. The bottom line is that through these courses we want to improve the health care available to refugees and IDPs as well as improving the standards of health care in some of the Karen rural villages. We believe that these courses will save lives.



# Build East Timor- A Hekan Housing Project

By Diane Clark

*Build East Timor is the project that is being run from our new office in Canberra. Diane Clark tells a little of the project and what we are hoping to achieve.*

The Hekan housing project was started by ARMS and MMM in 2001. Ricky and Sue McElroy became involved in the project from the very beginning and have continued to be involved and are now living in East Timor.

Since the first house was officially handed over to its recipient by President Xanana Gusmao on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003, there have been some adjustments made to the design and construction techniques. The new house design is much simpler, using a method of construction that is not unlike that which is traditionally used by the Timorese. It also uses materials that are mostly available in East Timor. Therefore local businesses have benefited.



Ricky and Sue McElroy and their children have committed to at least two years in East Timor to head up the Building project. During this time we hope to see the construction and handing over of the remaining houses. For this to happen we obviously need financial support, but a key factor in the completion of this project is the continuous involvement of volunteers. We are looking for individuals as well as teams; not necessarily skilled trades people or those with experience in overseas missions, just people who are willing and able to give a two or three week commitment to help the homeless people of East Timor.



We have welcomed the contribution of Samaritan's Purse to the Build East Timor project. Samaritan's Purse have contributed materials and shipping costs for all the house frames. We only need to raise another AUD\$2670 of the original AUD\$5000 per house. Samaritan's Purse are also using the Build East Timor Project to develop a prototype house to be used in future projects in the Tsunami ravaged area of Ache province in Indonesia.

At this stage the construction of the next eight houses in the rural location of Viqueque is progressing very well. Furthermore, we are able to thank God that the full cost of these eight houses has now been covered. We have also been able to encourage the recipients and other locals to work together on the project with the overseas volunteers. In this way we not only see people provided with housing but we also see lives transformed as we share the love of God in a very practical way.

Once the eight houses in Viqueque are completed we are looking at Baucau and Los Paulos as possible locations for the next group of houses.

Longer term we hope to establish a training centre, to teach the Timorese in all areas of building. We want to have visiting trades people come and not only teach building skills but also to input spiritually into the lives of the people of the world's youngest nation.

## **Hekan Recipients**

**Senhora Aguelina is a 53 year old war widow. Her husband fought 24 years for the independence of East Timor. Since her husband's death, Senhora Aguelina makes baskets to sell at a local market. With the money earned, she pays for her son Mauricio's university fees and her own living costs. She lives and sleeps at the market place where she sells her baskets.**

**Senhor Jose Soares was part of the first Portuguese military company in 1971. In 1979, they became the resistance, fighting for the independence of East Timor. As a result of this, Senhor Jose was forced to live in the mountains for 24 years with no source of income, and therefore no way of supporting the family he left behind. His wife and two daughters died during this time, only his son Ilario survived.**

**Senhora Aguelina and Senhor Soares are two of the 53 recipients of new housing provided by YWAM's Build East Timor project.**

# A TRUE CAMBODIAN HARVEST

By Marion Fromm

On December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2004, the first of Reverse The Curse (RTC) Cambodia's products went on sale in Phnom Penh. Now our products are selling in Supermarkets, Convenience Stores, Souvenir and Coffee shops, Hotels and restaurants.

It is so exciting to report that the vision that we had six years ago, to establish a dried fruit factory and train people with disabilities from land mine accidents, how to produce dried fruit, has continued to grow into a very busy factory, which now employs sixteen people, twelve of whom are land mine accident survivors and eleven of those have lost a leg.

RTC Cambodia's factory production has outgrown the available space in our present building and we need to purchase our own land and build a factory specially designed for disabled employees. While we were looking for the right property, our landlord gave us notice that we must vacate this building by the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2006. So we now face the challenge of finding somewhere suitable to rent in the interim. This is quite a challenge, because rents and land prices are escalating rapidly and we need a much larger rental property this time.



**From top to bottom.**  
Preparing the fruit.  
Staff with training certificates.  
Marion with the factory manager.  
The full compliment of RTC staff.

**“We are making a huge difference to the lives of many disabled people and their families.”**

We market our products under the brand name of *Cambodian Harvest* and our product range includes three varieties of fruit straps, made from Pawpaw and Pineapple, and Mango. In addition RTC makes Glacè Pawpaw, Glacè Pineapple, Glacè Mango and Glacè Ginger, and delicious Ginger Syrup. Our jams include Rose Apple Jam, Pineapple & Pawpaw Jam, Cashew Fruit Jam, Lemon Marmalade and Tomato Relish. These are very popular with both Cambodians and expatriates.

Last year, we had a volunteer from Australian Business Volunteers, come here for initially one month and then again later for two months, to train our staff and improve the quality of our products. We have now passed Australian health standards in both microbe and pesticide residue levels, making it possible to export our products. Two consignments have been exported to Australia.

We are making a huge difference to the lives of many disabled people and their families. They are happy, healthy and able to educate their children and they no longer live with the stress of trying to survive. After completing their initial six months of factory training, one of them has risen to a position of salesman and another to the position of factory manager. Others are being trained in product testing, computing and administration.

Our day begins with a staff meeting at 7.30am and work begins at eight o'clock. All the factory staff helps with cutting the day's fruit in preparation for cooking. Some are responsible for making jam while others are responsible for making fruit straps or glacè fruit. By the end of the day, the dehydrators are filled and the jam bottled and finished products labelled and stored.

Each staff member arrives at work by motorbike. Everyone has been issued with a helmet, which is not required by law in Cambodia. Lunch is provided every day and a staff member is assigned to cook the meal, which consists of rice, soup and a meat or fish dish with vegetables. According to Cambodian custom, the lunch break is two hours and one hour of this is spent on English language classes, four days a week. Two levels are being taught by a New Zealand volunteer teacher, beginners and advanced. Some of those who did not speak any English when they started work here, can now converse quite well with me, especially my driver, Heng, who is learning English very fast. Five of the staff now speak English very well.

## Leang Ouk's Story



*"I am the youngest in my family. I have one older brother and two older sisters. My family and I were born in Phnom Penh. I was born in 1967, so I was very young when Pol Pot controlled Cambodia. I had to stop studying when Pol Pot overran the country in 1975. When Phnom Penh was evacuated, my family and I went to Kampot province. When Pol Pot and Vietnam fought each other in 1979 I was old enough (13) to join Hun Sen's army, and fought the Khmer Rouge. From 1980 to 1988 I fought in the army against the Khmer Rouge. I didn't go to Vietnam but Hun Sen fought the Khmer Rouge with help from Vietnam.*

*I studied for one year at Kampong Speu, learning how to drive tanks. I usually drove a tank. There were four people in the tank. The Khmer Rouge put down lots of mines to stop tanks and to destroy them. Vietnam and Hun Sen controlled Phnom Penh in 1979 but Pol Pot went to the north of Cambodia and fought from the mountains near Thailand. In 1988 there was a battle near Pailin where the Khmer Rouge were fighting from on top of the mountains and tanks could not get up to them. During the battle I jumped down from the tank and a mine exploded. My leg was gone and I cried. There were lots of dead and dying soldiers everywhere.*

*The army brought me to hospital 179 near Watt Phnom, in Phnom Penh. They amputated once below the knee and then later above the knee, because of infection. I stayed at this hospital for three months. After that I lived in a home for former soldiers with disabilities for one year. There was quite good food and my health got better.*

*After I left the hospital, life was very difficult. I couldn't get a job. I moved to my brother's house after leaving the veterans hospital. My wife sold cakes to make a little money. My wife and I have lived with my brother and his family from 1989. I didn't have a job until Marion came and gave me a job, because she likes to help disabled people. Thank you Marion for giving me a job".*

Leang started work for RTC Cambodia in February 2006, as a Security Guard and is also being trained in fruit production.

**"...as I look at the bright faces of my staff every morning and I hear their happy chatter and laughter as they work, I remember the despair and hopelessness they had when they applied for their jobs..."**

this business successful. I watch their joy at being able to provide food and education for their families, go to work like other people, have enough money to further their education and show the world that they too can contribute to the growing prosperity of Cambodia. RTC's factory manager, Bunthoeun, is able to pay for his further education, as well as helping to support his land mine disabled parents and his seven brothers and sisters. He will complete a bachelor degree in Agriculture this year. One lady shared that never before had she been able to buy a new item of clothing or have enough to eat every day. She now feeds and educates her nephew as well, whose family is too poor to do so.

All those who have partnered with us to bring us to this point, are sharing in the fruit of our labour among these precious people. Without your support and commitment, none of this could have happened. We are very thankful for your financial help and with your continued assistance, we look forward to seeing this ministry expand in the near future, to benefit at least 100 land mine disabled people and their families, whose lives have been shattered by land mine explosions. We look forward to your generous support to meet our urgent need for funds to enable us to expand into our own specially built factory. For this we need AUD\$200,000.

**"... they amputated once below the knee and then later above the knee, because of infection. I stayed in hospital for three months..."**

Living in a third world country is always a challenge. Because of the huge building boom that Phnom Penh is experiencing, there are daily power cuts of up to nine hours per day, as power is rationed across the city. Our generator is in use every day to keep our factory supplied with electricity. We are so thankful to have it, although it costs more to run than the city electricity supply, it does enable us to continue production.

As I look at the bright faces of my staff every morning and I hear their happy chatter and laughter as they work, I remember the despair and hopelessness they had when they applied for their jobs. It is such a privilege to bring healing and wholeness to broken lives, which were shattered by land mine explosions. They have such enthusiasm to make



# MORE BRUTAL ATROCITIES IN BURMA

By David Skeat

I never cease to be astonished by the brutal acts of violence instigated by the Burmese army against the minority peoples of Burma.

In recent weeks reports of outrageous atrocities against IDP communities in Burma have come to light. In Karenii state the Burmese army booby trapped and land mined areas close to the border. Soon after laying their trap they attacked innocent IDP populations and drove them through the newly mined area – many

died or were seriously injured. Those that survived were met at the border by the Thai army who refused to let those fleeing cross into Thailand.

Those who did make it across were handed over to the Burmese military. Few survived.

## ... hatred and genocide that has gone on for the last 30 years ...



These incidents are not isolated but are part of a premeditated campaign of hatred and genocide that has gone on for the last 30 years. Every day people are killed or maimed or dispossessed by this brutal regime. Even as recently as last week, the Burmese Army shot a nine year old girl, who miraculously lived to tell about her ordeal.

The problems facing the IDP populations inside Burma are not going away but are increasing. Often when attacks happen, people do not have time to get any of their belongings they just run, often under fire into forests with their children in their arms. Often when they sneak back to their village to find some rice they are blown up by land mines or shot by sniper fire. Large groups of people often find themselves very much alone with few resources to live by.

Since the change in Thai policy that has seen the sealing of the refugee camps inside Thailand the IDPs have no hope of finding refuge outside of Burma. Military activity inside Karen and Karenii states seems to have increased and the list of casualties grows daily as people die from not only the direct attacks from the Burmese military but also from side effects; such as malnutrition, septic ulcers and blood poisoning. Many IDP communities have poor water no healthcare and are also dealing with diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, dysentery and typhus.

ARMS has been helping the IDPs communities in Burma for many years by raising money for emergency care of IDP populations as well as providing emergency medical resources to help them address some of the healthcare issues they are facing, but more needs to be done.

In a recent visit to the border I was again deeply impacted by the plight of these dear people and I want to do more to help them. To date most of our help has been in the form of ongoing financial aid and the provision of training for medics working amongst the IDPs. This we will continue to do but I would like to go much further. I would like to be able to provide an extra \$10,000 each year above what we already give as emergency aid for newly created IDP populations – this money will provide food, cooking pots, clothing and medical support for villagers that have been recently attacked by the Burmese military and who literally have nothing. If we could have 100 people to make an annual tax deductible donation of \$100 per year to this appeal we could reach this target easily.



# TRADING WITH THE ENEMY

By David Skeat

Australia is very affluent. We are indeed the *lucky country*. Our economy is good shape despite rising petrol prices. Today more Australians own shares than have ever at any other time. One key factor that has helped our economy along are the new trade initiatives in the form of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) we now have with the US, Singapore and Thailand. These have increased our markets and helped to increase our national prosperity.

Recently the Australian government announced that its intention to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement with the ASEAN nations. If this were to go ahead Australia could find itself trading with the *State Peace and Development Council*, (SPDC), the military junta that currently rules Burma with an iron fist.

Under an ASEAN FTA Australia could well have goods entering into its markets that are made by slave labor, the profits of which would go back to the same military junta who is buying the weapons that kill innocent villagers in a war of genocide that is killing millions. An FTA with the SPDC will only compound the problems currently being experienced by the Burmese IDPs.

Recently I wrote to the government on this issue and asked them not to negotiate the FTA with ASEAN as a whole but rather as individual nations so that Burma could be isolated out of the process. The reply I received told me that the government thought that an FTA that included Burma was in the best interests of Australia. Perhaps this is true, but is such an

FTA in the best interests of the people of Burma? Call me dumb if you like, but I do not see how the Australian national interest should take precedence over the needs of the people suffering under this brutal regime. Who were described by the UNHCR as being responsible for the worst genocide of the twentieth century. We should not be encouraging the SPDC but actively exposing their reign of terror. In my view, an FTA with Burma is a bad idea.

**“the SPDC are responsible for the worst genocide of the twentieth century”**



Members of Burma's ruling military junta.  
Do we really want to trade with them?

An FTA with Burma flies in the face of appeals made by Nobel laureate and democratically elected president of Burma Aung San Suu Khy (who has spent years under house arrest courtesy of the SPDC). She has asked foreign governments not to deal with the current regime. Although her appeal seems to have fallen on deaf ears as far as ASEAN is concerned. Recently the secretary of ASEAN said that *the ASEAN nations respected each other enough not to comment on each others' internal governance or human rights policy*. Something is clearly wrong here. Does this mean that as long as an ASEAN member state obeys the trade rules that it can do as it likes to its people?



Some of the SPDC's victims.

Human rights inside Burma have long been a concern of the international community, the World Health Organization said of the SPDC in Burma in 1996 that it was guilty of some of the worst cases of genocide that the world has seen in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent months the UN Security Council noted the Burma situation and has put it on the agenda for discussion. So why would we trade with them?

Please pray about this issue – I think that an FTA with the SPDC is a very bad idea and gives the SPDC and the atrocities it has committed a sense of legitimacy and validation. If Australia is to put its good name on a treaty with another nation, then that nation needs to deserve the endorsement that Australia's good name will bring.

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### Focus On Mercy

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## Quotable Quote

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith.

Saint Francis of Assisi

### Tax Deductible International Projects

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