

Community Health & Agricultural Development

A program of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia. A joint mission initiative of the General Board of Global Ministries and Connexion of the United Methodist Church, the Korean Methodist Church, the Methodist Church of Singapore and the World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches.

Our vision is for Methodist Mission in Cambodia churches to be engaging communities to experience wholeness of life — physically, socially and spiritually — as they witness to the transforming power of living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dear Supporters,

We here at Community Health and Agriculture Development, as well as the whole of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia, are in the midst of an exciting transition as churches across the country expand their community outreaches and the mission moves toward full conference status.

Members and observers at the Third Mission Conference Session of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia, held Sept. 1 and 2 in Phnom Penh, were able to celebrate this trend of local church outreach as program after program reported on the successes they had experienced in this area over the past year.

CHAD was among the mission agencies submitting a report to the conference session, and we are happy to share it with you in the following pages just as it appeared in the official conference journal. We hope you will be as excited about some of the developments reflected in our annual report as we are.

In particular, some facts merit special mention. As you can see from the tables on pages 111-112, almost 1,400 people are currently benefitting from CHAD's microfinance programs, which include loans for small businesses as well as agriculture-based loans for investment in rice, cows and pigs. The health side of our program has also fared well this year, as almost 2,000 people were treated at one of our medical clinics in partnership with Volunteer In Mission teams (see lower table on page 112).

Please take your time to look over the information and see just how your support is making a difference.

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Sincerely, The CHAD Team



Thank you! From . . .

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៨.១ របាយការណ៍គណៈកម្មការសង្គមកិច្ច ~

8.1 Community Health and Agricultural Development (CHAD) Program

ផែនការយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រនៃគម្រោងកម្មវិធី ឆាត CHAD Core Strategic Plan 2010-2015

ទស្សនៈវិស័យ:

ក្រុមជំនុំមេតូឌីស្ទនៃប្រទេសកម្ពុជា (MMC) ធ្វើឱ្យមានការចាប់អារម្មណ៍ដល់សហគមន៍ឱ្យទទួលបានបទពិសោធន៍នៃជីវិតពេញលេញ ដូចដែលគេធ្វើទីបន្ទាល់ឱ្យឃើញពីអំណាចបំផ្លាស់ប្តូរប្រែតាមរបៀបរបស់នៅតាមដំណឹងល្អនៃព្រះយេស៊ូវគ្រីស្ទ ។

Vision: Methodist Church in Cambodia (MMC) churches engaging communities to experience wholeness of life as they witness to the transforming power of living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

បេសកកម្ម:

ធ្វើការក្នុងក្រុមជំនុំមេតូឌីស្ទនៃប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ឆាត ព្យាយាមចែករំលែកក្តីស្រឡាញ់នៃព្រះ ដែលគេបានដឹងតាមរយៈ ព្រះយេស៊ូវ គ្រីស្ទ ក្នុងរបៀបដែលបង្កើតការជឿទុកចិត្ត ក្តីសង្ឃឹម និងជីវិតពេញលេញ ទាំងខាងរូបកាយ សង្គម និងព្រលឹងវិញ្ញាណ ។

Mission: Working within the MMC, CHAD seeks to share the love of God known through Jesus Christ in ways that create trust, hope and wholeness of life – physically, socially and spiritually.

គោលដៅរួម:

លើកកម្ពស់សុខភាព និងសុខុមាលភាពបុគ្គល គ្រួសារ និងសហគមន៍ជនបទ ដែលក្រុមជំនុំមេតូឌីស្ទធ្វើការ ។ ។

Overall Goal: Improved health and well-being of individuals, families and rural communities.

ការផ្តោតយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ គោលបំណង និងសកម្មភាពចម្បងៗក្នុងឆ្នាំ 2010-11

Strategic Focus, Objectives & Major Activities for 2010-11

ចំនួនកិច្ចការចម្បងចម្រុះ	HOLISTIC MINISTRY
<p>1. បង្កើនសមត្ថភាព MCC ដើម្បីដាក់បញ្ចូល ព័ន្ធកិច្ចនៃសកម្មភាពឈោង ទៅរកសហគមន៍នៅក្នុងជីវិតក្រុមជំនុំ ។</p> <p>2. បង្កើនសមត្ថភាពក្រុមជំនុំមូលដ្ឋាន ដើម្បីផ្តួចផ្តើមសកម្មភាពឈោងទៅរក សហគមន៍ ។</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • គាំទ្រគណៈកម្មការសង្គមកិច្ចថ្នាក់ជាតិ ។ • សិក្សាព្រះគម្ពីរដល់ក្រុមជំនុំមូលដ្ឋាន ពីការប្រមូលផ្តុំធនធានក្នុង ក្រុមជំនុំ ដើម្បីបង្កើតគណៈកម្មការសង្គមកិច្ចមូលដ្ឋាន ។ • ពិនិត្យ និងតាមដានក្រុមគំរោងដែលមានស្រាប់ជាមួយគណៈកម្មការសង្គមកិច្ច ។ 	<p>1. Increase capacity of MMC to integrate outreach ministries into congregational life</p> <p>2. Increase capacity of local churches to initiate outreach activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to National Social Concern Committee • Bible Study for local congregations in Mobilizing the church for formation of Local Social Concern Committee • Monitoring and follow-up existing project groups with SCC
<p>3. បង្កើនការប្រើប្រាស់សេវាសុខភាពរបស់រដ្ឋ ដល់ក្រុមជំនុំ និងសហគមន៍ ។</p> <p>4. ធ្វើឱ្យប្រសើរឡើងនូវស្ថានភាពអនាម័យ និង សុខភាពនៃបុគ្គល និងបរិស្ថាន តាមរយៈសកម្មភាពលើកកម្ពស់ សុខភាព និងព័ន្ធកិច្ចផ្នែកពេទ្យ ។</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ទទួលរៀបចំសំរាប់ក្រុមគ្រូពេទ្យស្ម័គ្រចិត្ត ។ • គាំទ្រការបញ្ជូនជម្ងឺមកកាន់មន្ទីរនៅភ្នំពេញ និងតាមតំបន់ តាមរយៈមូលនិធិសុខភាពតំបន់ ។ • បង្កើនការយល់ដឹង ដើម្បីធ្វើសកម្មភាពដល់សហគមន៍ ពីការការពារជម្ងឺគ្រុនចាញ់ និងជម្ងឺអេដស៍ ។ 	<p>HEALTH</p> <p>3. Increase access of church & community to government health services.</p> <p>4. Improve environmental & personal health & hygiene situation through promotive health activities and medical outreaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting Medical volunteer teams. • Support referrals to Phnom Penh and at district level through District Health Fund. • Awareness raising for HIV/AIDS and Malaria prevention outreach by local congregations.

<p align="center">សុវត្ថិភាពស្បៀង</p> <p>5. បង្កើន និងធ្វើឱ្យបានច្រើនបែប នូវកសិផលិតកម្មដែលមិនប៉ះពាល់បរិស្ថាន និងការប្រើប្រាស់ដំណាំដែលមានអាហារូបត្ថម្ភខ្ពស់ និងផលិតផលបសុសត្វ ។</p> <p>6. បង្កើនសមត្ថភាពសំរាប់ការរក្សាទុក កែឆ្អែ និងទីផ្សារ នូវកសិផលិតផល ។</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • បង្កើត និងគាំទ្រដល់ក្រុមធនាគារស្រូវ ក្រុមចិញ្ចឹមជ្រូក និងក្រុមចិញ្ចឹមគោ ។ • ណែនាំបង្ហាញបច្ចេកទេសធ្វើដីកំប៉ុស្ត ។ 	<p align="center">FOOD SECURITY</p> <p>5. Increase and diversify sustainable farm production and consumption of high nutrition crops and livestock products.</p> <p>6. Increase capacity for storage processing and marketing of farm products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation and support of rice banks, cow & pig raising groups. • Introduction of composting techniques.
<p align="center">ចង្រៃត្រួតចំណូល</p> <p>7. ពង្រីកការប្រើប្រាស់ដល់បុគ្គល នូវប្រាក់កម្ចីខ្នាតតូច សំរាប់មុខជំនួញតូចតាម ។</p> <p>8. បង្កើនសមត្ថភាពក្រុមតាមមូលដ្ឋានឱ្យចេះចាត់ចែង ធនធានថវិកា ដោយមានការទទួលខុសត្រូវ តម្លាភាព និងគ្រប់គ្រងល្អ ។</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • បង្កើត និងគាំទ្រក្រុមតម្បាញ គោយន្ត និងក្រុមសន្សំ ឥណទានផ្សេងៗទៀត ។ • ចុះពិនិត្យ ដើម្បីជួយដល់ការកត់ត្រាបញ្ជីស្នាមរបស់ក្រុមទាំងអស់ ។ 	<p align="center">INCOME GENERATION</p> <p>7. Expand access of individuals to microloans for small business.</p> <p>8. Increase capacity of local groups to manage financial resources with sound stewardship, transparency and accountability..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation & support of weaving, hand tractor and other Savings & Credit groups. • Monitoring visits to assist with all group's record-keeping.

តារាងសង្ខេបគម្រោងកម្មវិធី អាគ តាមតំបន់ (ធ្វើបច្ចុប្បន្នភាព កក្កដា ២០១១)

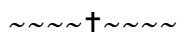
CHAD Project Summary Table By District (Updated July 2011)

District តំបន់	ចិញ្ចឹមគោ Cow Raising			ធនាគារស្រូវ Rice Bank			ចិញ្ចឹមជ្រូក Pig Raising			ចំនួនក្រុម ដែល បរាជ័យ # of Failed Project Groups
	ចំនួនក្រុម ដែលនៅ ដំណើរការ # of Active Groups	ចំនួន សមាជិក # of Members	ចំនួន គោ សរុប Total # of Cows	ចំនួនក្រុម ដែលនៅ ដំណើរការ # of Active Groups	ចំនួន សមាជិក # of Members	ចំនួនស្រូវ សរុប (គ.ក) Amount of rice (kg)	ចំនួនក្រុម ដែលនៅ ដំណើរការ # of Active Groups	ចំនួន សមាជិក # of Members	ចំនួនគ្រួសារ បានទទួល ជ្រូកចិញ្ចឹម # of Recipients (family)	
ស្វាយរៀង Svay Reing	6	83	36	9	133	6,249	1	12	3	1
កំពង់ស្ពឺ Kompong Speu	5	42	25	8	151	19,243	0	0	0	0
កំពង់ធំ Kompong Thom	8	116	82	9	273	28,901	0	0	0	2
បាត់ដំបង Battambang	4	26	23	7	121	13,359	0	0	0	3
បន្ទាយមានជ័យ Banteay Meanchey	1	10	4	4	97	7,400	0	0	0	8
កណ្តាល Kandal	2	17	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
តាកែវ Takeo	1	15	5	6	67	6,000	0	0	0	1
កំពង់ឆ្នាំង Kompong Chnnang	0	0	0	3	36	3,315	0	0	0	0
ភ្នំពេញ Phnom Penh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
សរុប: Total	27	309	182	46	878	84,467	1	12	3	15

Incom Generating Projects District តំបន់	សន្សំ និងឥណទាន Savings & Credit*			តម្បាញ គោយន្ត Weaving & Hand Tractor			ចំនួនក្រុម ដែល បរាជ័យ # of Failed Project Groups
	ចំនួនក្រុម ដែលនៅ ដំណើរការ # of Active Groups	ចំនួន សមាជិក # of Members	ចំនួនប្រាក់ ក្នុងក្រុម សរុប Total Amount of Actual Group	ចំនួនក្រុម ដែលនៅ ដំណើរការ # of Active Groups	ចំនួន សមាជិក # of Members	ចំនួនប្រាក់ប្រមូល មក វិញសរុប Total Amount of Money	
ស្វាយរៀង Svay Reing	5	71	2,393	1	8	420	1
កំពង់ស្ពឺ Kompong Speu	1	4	255	0	0	0	0
កំពង់ធំ Kompong Thom	2	34	2,002	0	0	0	0
បាត់ដំបង Battambang	2	22	1,304	0	0	0	0
បន្ទាយមានជ័យ Bantaey Meanchey	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
កណ្តាល Kandal	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
តាកែវ Takeo	1	12	369	1	6	835	1
កំពង់ឆ្នាំង Kompong Chnnang	0	0	0	1	7	153	1
ភ្នំពេញ Phnom Penh	1	11	500	1	10	500	0
សរុប: Total	12	164	6,823	4	31	3,204	8

*includes "Chicken Raising" groups

Holistic Ministry & Health District តំបន់	សិក្សាព្រះគម្ពីរដល់គណៈកម្មការ សង្គមកិច្ចមូលដ្ឋាន LSCC Bible Study		សកម្មភាពសុខភាព Health Activities		ការព្យាបាលរបស់ក្រុមគ្រូពេទ្យស្ម័គ្រចិត្ត Medical Clinic
	ចំនួនក្រុមជំនុំ ចូល រួមបណ្តុះបណ្តាល # of Church Participated in Training	ចំនួនអ្នកចូលរួម បណ្តុះបណ្តាល # of Participates Attended Training	ការបញ្ជូនជម្ងឺមក ភ្នំពេញ PP Health Referrals	ចំនួនអ្នកចូលរួម បណ្តុះបណ្តាល ពីជម្ងឺគ្រុនចាញ់ និងអេដស៍ # of Participants Attended Aids/Malaria	ចំនួនអ្នកជម្ងឺ ដែល បានទទួល ព្យាបាល # of Patients Treated by Volunteers Medical Clinic in 2010-11
កំពង់ចាម Kompong Cham	4	24	27	2	
ស្វាយរៀង Svay Reing	3	19	3	6	1,900
កំពង់ស្ពឺ Kompong Speu	8	32	5	4	
កំពង់ធំ Kompong Thom	5	28	1	4	
បាត់ដំបង Battambang			2	4	
ប.មានជ័យ B. Meanchey	4	23	6	4	
កណ្តាល Kandal			7	5	
តាកែវ Takeo			4	6	
កំពង់ឆ្នាំង Kompong Chnnang	1	18	6	5	
ភ្នំពេញ Phnom Penh			13	6	
សរុប: Total	24	144	74	46	19,00



Community Health and Agricultural *development*

Summer | 2011

A program of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia. A joint mission initiative of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, the Korean Methodist Church, the Methodist Church of Singapore and the World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches.

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A Rice Bank Group Making Known God's Kingdom *by Leng Thy*

In the minority-Christian country of Cambodia, many local churches simply long for growth, but do not want to do any work that requires them to sacrifice even a little of the assets that they have. This story of an outstanding project group, told by its leader, provides an idea of how powerful it is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

A rice bank group at Raksmei church located in a north-east province of Cambodia is one of the CHAD project groups that has been highly effective in sharing the good news of God's Kingdom through its powerful strategy of ministering to and among the suffering.

"Everyone in my church recognizes their Christian role, actively and sacrificially caring for people, no matter who they are" said Mr. Chok Choung, the 50 year-old Lay Leader, and chair of the Community Development Committee at the local Raksmei church.

Sitting on a pile of firewood under the shade tree in front of his house, this faithful leader shared a very exciting story of the rice bank project initiated by his church and community members. A smiling face expressed his confidence; full of hope and delight Mr. Chok Choung let us know that this rice bank project was initially formed in March 2008 in response to the need of poor families who suffered from food shortages during the rainy season and who paid high interest rates to the market rice lenders. He stated that at the beginning there were only 19 people interested. The project received an initial grant of \$750 from CHAD to buy 3000 kg of rice. He said what helped them to grow was the principle of learn-

ing together from the Bible. This kept them faithful and encouraged them to apply what they had learned. As a result of this endeavor, each member goes out to community to imitate Jesus, doing what he did, using both word and deed. This is a change from their previous activities of using only words in their outreach approach. Group members, for example, share sacrificially from the little resources they have to poor families when they see them hungry and unable to afford to feed themselves.

He added another example of how the rice bank group members have declared God's Kingdom. They took care of seven families whose houses had recently burned. The fire damaged everything. Their few possessions were destroyed and they were left with no food, no shelter, and no clothes or other necessities. Seeing this, the rice bank members compassionately took 500 kg of rice from the store and collected among the members another 40,000 Riel (\$10.00). They did all of this to help the victims even though they are not their immediate neighbors or fellow Christians, but live in another village a ways from Raksmei.

A few days later, Mr. Chok Choung continued, a letter from a commune (local government) office where the fire had happened came to the rice bank group. He took it out and read. It was a letter from the victims to say thank you gratefully for the immediate response to those in need. They appreciated the generous support and admitted that Christians are really good. Knowing



Mr. Chok Choung reviewing the rice bank records with members. Photo by Amanda King

that they were interested in understanding more about God, the group visited them and shared the gospel. Since then, a preaching point has been formed there. He emphasized that this shows how powerful it is when the church carries out its task by following what Jesus did and what he continues to do through us, using both word and deed.

Surely, since the group continues to be faithful and committed to work together, God blesses them to experience explosive growth. The amount of rice, during this three-year period, for example, has increased from 3000 kg at the beginning up to 6591 kg at this moment. As the group has been foreshadowing what God's Kingdom would be like, there is a constant influx of people who want to join the group. Right now, there are five more non-Christian families requesting to be included in the rice bank group. "These are ways that our church is reaching out to people; we want to glorify God," said Mr. Chok Choung, smiling.



Partnership in mission

Mission is about reaching out across the boundaries that divide us. Those can be obvious boundaries of nation, language or culture or more subtle divisions of education, economics or experience.

Here are a few ideas of volunteer opportunities available locally (in your home church) or in Cambodia that will support the CHAD program of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia. Let us know what you are doing so we can share together.

In your home church:

Pass on this newsletter to a friend or reprint it in your church bulletin or newsletter.

Collect 10 (or more) email addresses of people who would like to receive Katherine's monthly email. Send to ktparker@gmail.com

Lead a book study of *The Road of Lost Innocence* by Somoly Mom (UMW reading list 2010 available from www.missionresourcecenter.org) and learn about how small micro-credit programs like CHAD can help give women in Cambodia new options.

Connect youth to B1 (one being, being one) campaign, and link up with the CHAD program. <http://www.fasttodaychangetomorrow.org> Youth can learn about global poverty and food security and focus on how they can impact the world for better.

Lead a book study of *The Tears of My Soul* by Sokreaksa S. Himm (ask Katherine about copies) and discuss how Christ is leading Cambodians into new relationships of trust and healing.

Learn about food security needs and encourage folks to donate their weekly, monthly or annual food budget to support food security projects like the formation of a rice bank. For stories about the importance of food security ministry <http://chad-cambodia.blogspot.com/>.

Connect your Vacation Bible School to Cambodia and CHAD (eg. Caring for God's Creatures). Contact Anne Scott <annejscott@att.net> for ideas.

Coming to Cambodia:

Do a "home-stay" with missionary Katherine Parker during your vacation in Cambodia.

Send a college student as a Summer Intern or shadow the work of a CHAD missionary. Come for 1-3 weeks to explore Cambodia and shadow a missionary or longer as an intern (college credit may be possible). Come and take pictures, listen to people and help us to write "Stories of Transformation" that help bring the message of God's work in Cambodia to our partners around the world. There are opportunities to travel to the field to observe and learn about the church in Cambodia our work with a missionary. Learn first hand about tropical agriculture, small business development or water & sanitation challenges. Contact Katherine for a budget estimate and details.

Volunteer as a Development Facilitator. Come and work with one or two specific church communities to advance their plans for development. Work includes facilitating bible studies, teaching basic health messages or improving community skills according to your ability. CHAD will provide all lesson plans in English and Khmer. The first criterion is an open heart and mind. Skill needed include community health nurses, gardening, textile and craft design, budgeting and business plan formation, animal husbandry (esp. feed preparation). A minimum eight week commitment is needed. Contact Katherine for a budget estimate.

WATER:

THE CENTER OF LIFE

By Lukas Meier
Intern from Switzerland

During all my education, I was taught that water is the origin and the basis of every life. But it wasn't until I came to Cambodia, that I learned exactly what that means.

The reason for my sudden understanding was my observations on a farm in Takeo where I lived for 3 months.

The water source on that farm is the fishpond. The fishpond is filled during the rainy season and is used the whole year. The family uses it for cooking and drinking water, to wash their clothes and to bathe. The animals drink out of the fishpond, and all of the vegetables, which are planted during the dry season, are watered out of the fishpond. And last but not least, the fishpond is used to raise fish.

The water inside that fishpond is the basis for all life on the farm.

The advantage of this system is that the farmers are able to use their natural resources without wasting the groundwater.

But there are also problems caused by their system.

Because the fishpond the only source of water, any problems that arise with it can leave the whole farm without water — and, if prolonged, without life.

The other problems are smaller and not as obvious. There is a possibility that the chemicals in soaps and laundry detergents can cause health problems for human, animals and fish. Moreover, if the farmer uses chemicals to kill vermin or applies pesticides to his plants, the leftover can run off into the pond. And when the now-contaminated water is used to water the same plants again, the vermin can develop resistance to the chemical. This chemical resistance is a long-term problem and leads to higher chemical costs for the farmer.

There is just an estimation of the type of problems that could develop, but on the long-term, they really are serious. But there are a few simple approaches.

If the farmer tries to use as little chemical as possible, or even avoids applying it altogether, he can avoid the negative effect. By using biodegradable shampoos and laundry detergents, this effect could be stopped too. By learning about the general effects of chemicals, the farmers can better comprehend how to work with chemicals without risking the health of humans, animals and plants.

And again I understand how clean water is the foundation for all life.

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www.youtube.com/mmcambodia

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Flashback: CHAD health programs bring healing, faith to rural villages

By Irene Mparutsa • Originally posted to the CHAD blog in Feb. 2010

In 2009, Pho Linn, a woman from the Phum Meas rural area, had come to a clinic sponsored by CHAD and a volunteer health team from the United States. She was weak with ovarian cancer. We laid hands on her and prayed, referring her to the Russian Hospital in Phnom Penh. The doctor there could do nothing for her except confirm the cancer. A Methodist pastor stopped by and prayed with her every day.

About a year later, I was accompanying a United Methodist Volunteer-in-Mission team from Virginia when I saw her again. She looked well! She was experiencing some pain, so I asked her to return to the Phnom Penh hospital for review. The doctor confirmed that she had no more cancer! She had continued to pray to Jesus; and, in her Buddhist village, the word has gotten around. She went home with a Bible, and her brother-in-law is now asking about building a church.

ACCESS TO CARE

After a meeting in Kratie with the Provincial Health Director to talk about the problem of goiters (enlargements of the thyroid gland), we decided to work to-

gether on a campaign to prevent the problem. Being able to work with high-level government officials on health issues is an exciting part of the Cambodia Mission Initiative's health ministry. We will begin with a house-to-house survey to learn more about the disease and what has already been done for it. While in Kratie, we visited some village health centers to continue building relationships and bridges between local health services, the church, and the community.

Another goal of our visit to Kratie was to continue nurturing the newly established congregation there.

Last week, the office door opened and Yei (Granny) Oeun and her pastor walked in. At first I thought she was Ming Phalla, another yei from her church who also has a beguiling smile and only one tooth. Yei Oeun and her pastor had a good laugh over my confusion and then she began to tell me her story. She wanted a referral letter for free treatment at a clinic. I admired the wisdom of her appeal to CHAD for help. One translation of Proverbs 1:2 speaks of the "discipline of wise thoughtfulness." She had heard of the CHAD ministry from her friend, Ming Phalla. Using the wisdom God had given



Pho Linn poses at GBGM offices in March 2011. Photo by Amanda King

her, she had thought it through and come to ask for help.

A great part of the health ministry continues to be helping people access health care here in Phnom Penh. Church members and their families and neighbors from the 147 Methodist Mission in Cambodia congregations — which are located all over the country — call on their pastors, who, in turn, contact CHAD. As the word gets out about CHAD, the number of people asking for help is growing. In January, members of the Social Concerns Committee participated in a training to build their skills in advocating for affordable treatments.

[See pg. 2 for an update](#)

UPDATE

Cancer survivor brings home mission of hope, healing

In 2010, CHAD brought you the story of Pho Linn, a cancer survivor from central Cambodia who was able to find help and advocacy through CHAD's health outreach program. Today, Pho has become an advocate in her own right, steering others toward conventional medical care and the healing power of Christ.

By Amanda King

On a blisteringly hot and humid afternoon in a small village in central Cambodia, a handful of neighbors are tucked away in the welcoming shade of Pho Linn's humble home.

It's planting season — the time of year when Pho would normally spend sunrise to sunset in the rice paddy, transplanting rice seedlings by hand into the rain-softened earth. But this year, she finds herself confined to her home after a yearlong fight with cervical cancer.

In 2010, Pho walked away from a Phnom Penh hospital in remission but in no shape to return to farming. But where her body was weakened, Pho's spirit had found strength.

"She's become a missionary in her own village," said United Methodist Missionary and CHAD staffer Irene Mparutsa, who came to know Pho through CHAD's medical transportation outreach. "She's on a mission for God."

The small gathering at Pho's home is part of her newfound mission — though she hardly calls it such; she just calls it 'sharing.'

Clustered amongst her neighbors in the confines of her stilted home, shaded by the paper-thin walls of woven sugar palm leaves, Pho reads to them from the pages of her children's Bible.

The Bible was a gift to Pho by Mparutsa as the woman was grappling with her deadly cancer diagnosis. Today, the book has become a gift to the entire village, as Pho reads it aloud in her native Khmer to the gathering of friends and neighbors in her home. They come to hear the stories of Joseph and his coat and Noah and his ark, and to see the vivid illustrations that accompany them, like those typical of a children's Bible in any language.

But those aren't the only stories Pho is telling. Also central to her "mission" is the spreading of her own story — how she found hope and healing in God.

The story has people in this overwhelmingly Buddhist village curious, keeping them coming back time and again to hear more.

And Pho doesn't disappoint. She recounts over and over how scared she was when she started bleeding — and didn't stop; how she visited and prayed with a team of volunteer doctors from the U.S. who referred her to a Phnom Penh Hospital, fearing the worst; how doctors at the hospital diagnosed her with ovarian cancer, telling her not to bother seeking treatment as the odds of survival were too low; how she and her family were devastated.

But at its darkest point, Pho's sto-

ry changes directions. She tells of how CHAD staff laid hands on her and prayed for her at the hospital following the diagnosis; how she continued to pray with her local Methodist pastor daily; and how even when she thought she was dying, she found hope and strength in prayer. And finally, she tells her favorite part — how a year later, without having received treatment she was still alive and well, and went to the same hospital for a test only to walk out with a smile on her face after doctors confirmed she was in remission.

The power of Pho's testimony is clear.

"People in this village have come to know God and the power of His healing all through this one woman who had just a passing encounter and a prayer with a medical team," Mparutsa said, recalling the beginning of Pho's journey, when she met with a group of doctors from the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church.

That prayer, and the healing journey that followed it, has given Pho the courage to pray for others — even those who don't share her Christian beliefs.

In fact, Pho and her prayers have become somewhat renowned in her community after a sick neighbor woman came to her seeking prayer and recuperated shortly after, according to Pho.

"This is making the story go around in the village — 'Go to Pho and she will pray for you,'" Mparutsa said.

It isn't just the value of prayer that Pho is touting. Hers is a dual mission. She has also become an evangelist for modern medicine, steering wary patients toward hospitals and doctors they have traditionally avoided.

"People lived in fear of conventional medical treatment, and now through one woman, that fear is gone ... She's become an advocate for equitable health care, but also a witness for love and power — the power of God to impact lives and the love of Christ."

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www.youtube.com/mmcambodia

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