

ROTARY CLUB OF DAMANSARA



Visit Report
Humanitarian mission to Cambodia
21st July to 25th July 2007
by the Interact Club of elc International school in
association with Rotary Club of Damansara

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1.0 Introduction

In July 2007, a group of 9 Rotarians and the 13 elc International school Interactors and 1 elc teacher advisor visited Cambodia. We were accompanied by several Rotarian family members and also an elc parent and her daughter. The trip combined a site seeing of Cambodian Historical sites and meetings with key Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) with the following objectives:

1. Hand over the funds (RM 21, 000, US\$6027), raised by the interact club of elc International School during their IU Day 2006, to a landmine victim centre in Cambodia.
2. Donation of stationary items and soft toys to children at an Orphanage.
3. A fact finding visit to draw up a strategy for establishing a rain water harvesting scheme for schools in Cambodia possibly through a matching grant in conjunction with a local NGO and the Rotary Club of Phnom Pehn.
4. Explore other areas where we can provide active support to the Cambodian community.

2.0 Visit to The Angkor Association for the Disabled (AAD)

On 23rd July Mr. Sem Sovantha, Director of AAD and Mr Pring Panharith, Manager Cambodian Mine Action Centre (Demining Unit 4) picked us up at our Hotel and we headed by road to the AAD centre arriving there at 9 am. Mr Sovanta immediately introduced us to the staff and residents of the centre and proceeded to unfold to us his personal storey.

In 1990 Captain Sem Sovantha of the Cambodian Army was in patrol in Kampong Speu province when he stepped on a landmine. He lost both legs and was retired.

His government pension of 50 cents a day was not enough to live on. He didn't have the skills necessary for employment, so he was forced into begging. It was a very hard life, but he didn't lose hope. Through amazing determination, he put himself through school, then

found a job with a non-government organisation (NGO), helping other disabled people in Cambodia.

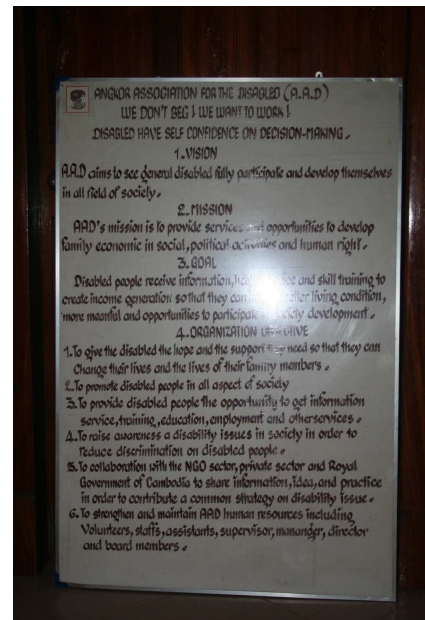
In 2002, the NGO ran out of funding and closed. Once again, Sovantha didn't lose hope. Instead, he began helping the disabled of Cambodia on his own. Sem Sovantha knows what it is to escape from poverty and begging. It is with this in mind that he founded Angkor Association for the Disabled (AAD), based in Siem Reap, the town adjoining the world-famous tourist destination of Angkor Wat and the other Angkorian temples. In Feb 2004, AAD was registered as an NGO in Cambodia.

The majority of disabled beggars get trapped in a life of begging. They lose hope. Begging strips away their dignity. They fall into a state of despair. They have goals but struggle to move towards them without outside assistance. It is hard to think long-term when all day, every day, is spent begging for daily rice. AAD works to break them out of this cycle. Its mission is to give these people the hope and the help they need so they can change their lives.

To this end, AAD provides:

- housing for AAD members in transition from a life begging on the streets, until they are able to move into homes of their own
- support and training in the establishment of micro-businesses or other sustainable income-generating activities
- AAD also works to overcome discrimination against the disabled, striving to get its members jobs in the hotels and restaurants that service the thriving tourist destination of Siem Reap.





Following the introductory remarks and a showing of a video we were taken for a walk around to meet the persons being trained in Carpentry, Sewing and also expert wood carvers creating various figurines for sale. Our group purchased music CDS, Cards, T Shirts and other items during the short stay. This was followed by a handing over of the funds raised by the elc students. A bank draft of US\$ 6027.55 was handed over while the resident band entertained us to local music. We reluctantly left the centre at about 10.45 am for our next visit to CMAC

3.0 Visit to The Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC)

3.1 Introduction

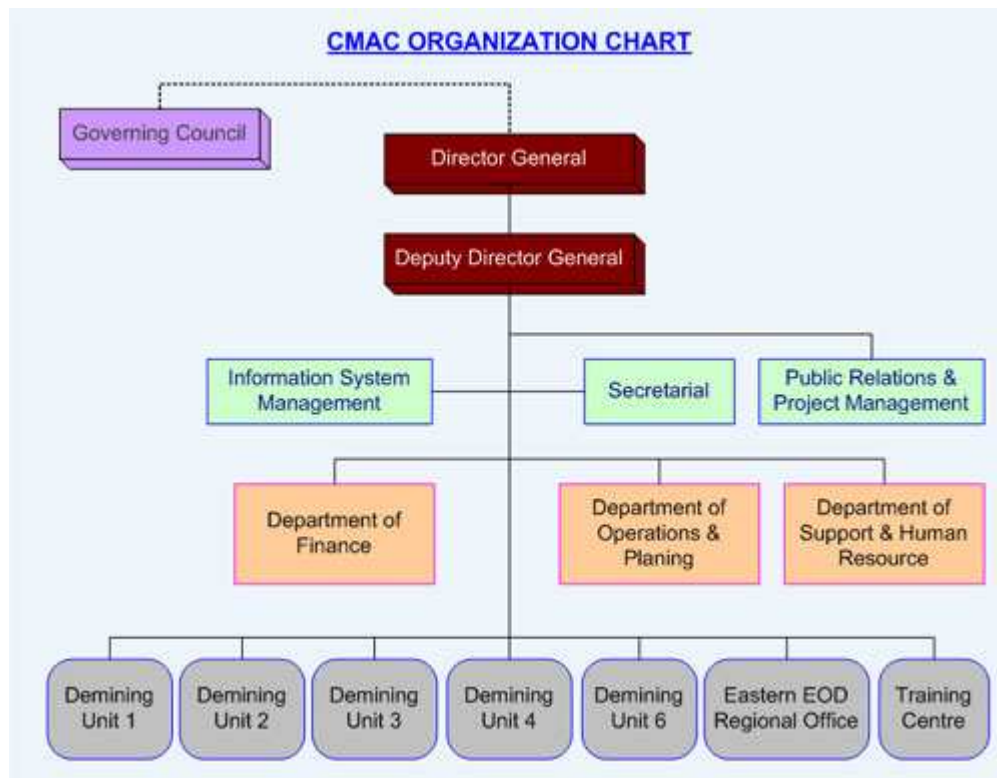
We travelled by road to the new CMAC Demining Unit 4 Headquarters in Siem Reap.

After a short introduction by Dr Kriban G N on behalf of the Malaysian delegation Mr Prin Panharith proceeded with a comprehensive presentation of the history, purpose and future vision of CMAC. On the average, landmines and UXO maimed or killed over 600 Cambodians every month in 1992 when Cambodia and UNTAC established the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) to rid the country of the calamity. The CMAC's humanitarian mandate is to clear land for resettlement of Internally Displaced People (IDP), agriculture, community development, and reconstruction of the national infrastructure.



Under the UNDP project of Assistance to Demining Programmes, CMAC grew rapidly from a small group of local deminers and a few international experts at the start in 1993 (when the group was known as MCTU), to a large national organization that employed close to 3,000 deminers and HQ personnel by June 1998. CMAC's organizational structure for the Executive is established on four functional areas: Mine Awareness,

Mine Verification, Mine/ UXO Clearance and Training. The largest component of CMAC includes the CMAC demining platoons.



At its peak in 1999, there were 67 humanitarian demining platoons and three contract (development) demining platoons. Currently 48 normal and mobile platoons are deployed in six separate demining units in 8 different provinces. The CMAC function of minefield verification encompasses a number of discrete activities: survey, verification and mine marking. 18 EOD teams are deployed throughout the country to handle EOD tasks. In an important structural change accomplished during the year of 1999, Community Mine Marking was moved under the Mine/UXO Awareness Branch. Training and re-training activities are now primarily conducted at the CMAC Training Centre in Kampong Chhnang.

3.2 Government Initiative

The Royal Government of Cambodia has continued to be one of the most active supporters of the international movement to ban landmines. This was confirmed in 1997

when Cambodia became one of the signatories to the Ottawa Convention on the total ban of landmines - one of the most effective and widely supported international conventions ratified through the United Nations. Through tireless efforts by the Government and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, with generous support and contributions from donor countries, CMAC has been able to free hazardous areas of mines and UXO totaling to more than 106 square kilometres from 1993 to May, 2003. CMAC has found and destroyed over 181,659 anti-personnel mines; 3,514 antitank mines and 750,887 items of UXO, and cleared over 273,732,034 fragments.

3.3 Conclusion

The CMAC Mission Statement clearly states objectives as 'Saving Lives and Supporting Development' for Cambodia, This has been achieved through the following core activities





- Mine Awareness Education
- Mine Information, Survey and Marking
- Mine Clearance and Explosive Ordnance Disposal
- Training Centre

A summary of the land mine clearing activities is given below and CMAC has a Target to be rid of Land Mines in the main productive areas by 2015. CMAC believe this is possible due to the increased efficiencies being deployed by a combination of training and the use of more effective modern equipment which are being deployed after years of R & D in conjunction with the Japanese Government. Increasingly the focus is on retraining villagers to work the land and to be mindful of the actual danger of unexploded mines while getting on with their productive lives.

Progress Summary 1992 to June 2007

| Progress/Period | Cleared | | | Found and Destroyed | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | Area Cleared (m2) | Marked liner (m) | Area Reduction (ha) | Anti-Pers Mine | Anti-Tank Mine | UXO | Fragmentations |
| Dec-07 | | | | | | | |
| Nov-07 | | | | | | | |
| Oct-07 | | | | | | | |
| Sep-07 | | | | | | | |
| Aug-07 | | | | | | | |
| Jul-07 | | | | | | | |
| Jun-07 | 2,291,157 | 274,224 | 1,830.77 | 2,270 | 43 | 9,597 | 1,971,794 |
| May-07 | 2,330,702 | 218,586 | 1,586.05 | 2,704 | 45 | 8,831 | 2,067,689 |
| Apr-07 | 1,936,141 | 187,637 | 1,658.01 | 2,051 | 72 | 8,271 | 1,982,738 |
| Mar-07 | 2,401,101 | 257,162 | 476.47 | 2,159 | 51 | 6,836 | 1,716,992 |
| Feb-07 | 2,191,794 | 162,272 | 117.54 | 2,328 | 80 | 8,495 | 1,602,969 |
| Jan-07 | 2,134,488 | 204,666 | 349.49 | 3,542 | 104 | 11,238 | 1,897,901 |
| Total 2007 | 13,285,383 | 1,304,547 | 6,018.32 | 15,054 | 395 | 53,268 | 11,240,083 |
| CMAC 2006 | 26,772,625 | 2,032,983 | 10,926.74 | 35,745 | 1,000 | 113,296 | 26,109,554 |
| CMAC 2005 | 22,086,486 | 1,437,124 | 3,503.00 | 74,165 | 851 | 128,865 | 23,866,907 |
| CMAC 2004 | 11,157,336 | 734,242 | 1,788.28 | 43,635 | 936 | 106,360 | 20,804,831 |
| CMAC 2003 | 9,708,686 | 518,072 | | 22,160 | 504 | 76,671 | 21,032,570 |
| CMAC 2002 | 11,582,239 | 486,143 | | 32,688 | 493 | 61,840 | 19,767,069 |
| CMAC 2001 | 9,637,455 | 854,917 | | 16,916 | 465 | 77,034 | 14,069,870 |
| CMAC 2000 | 8,369,635 | 115,466 | | 15,733 | 628 | 45,379 | 20,894,845 |
| CMAC 1999 | 10,797,705 | 209,969 | | 14,322 | 649 | 67,610 | 17,480,591 |
| CMAC 1998 | 12,382,541 | | | 13,536 | 245 | 47,313 | 19,583,367 |
| CMAC 1997 | 15,565,421 | | | 17,035 | 266 | 32,767 | 12,110,064 |
| CMAC 1996 | 10,493,654 | | | 7,126 | 190 | 31,574 | 64,352,250 |
| CMAC 1995 | 10,150,014 | | | 22,115 | 93 | 47,123 | 23,670,218 |
| CMAC Nov/93-Dec/94 | 7,865,242 | | | 12,126 | 121 | 208,854 | 52,334,579 |
| UNTAC Mar/92-Oct/93 | 5,479,850 | | | 19,433 | 132 | 96,486 | 22,085,279 |
| Total 1992-2006 | 172,048,889 | 6,388,916 | 16,218.02 | 346,735 | 6,573 | 1,141,172 | 358,161,994 |
| Total 1992-Jun/2007 | 185,334,272 | 7,693,463 | 22,236.34 | 361,789 | 6,968 | 1,194,440 | 369,402,077 |
| Total Landmine/UXO Found and Destroyed 1992 - June 2007 = | | | | | 1,563,197 | | |

4.0 Visit to Resource Development International – Cambodia (RDI C)

4.1 Introduction

This year as part of RC Damansara's first visit to Cambodia we explored the issue of water supply and the possible options for promoting a rain water harvesting scheme in rural schools. In this context we made contact with RDIC an American NGO just outside of Phnom Pehn which has experience in promoting water and sanitation projects locally. We spent the morning of the 24th July 2007 on a comprehensive tour of facilities. RDIC has a 10 year history in Cambodia and is involved in various aspects of Water Purification, Sanitation, Rainwater Harvesting and Providing Water Testing and documentation facilities. It is the intention of RC Damansara to partner with RDIC in any forthcoming water related projects in Cambodia.

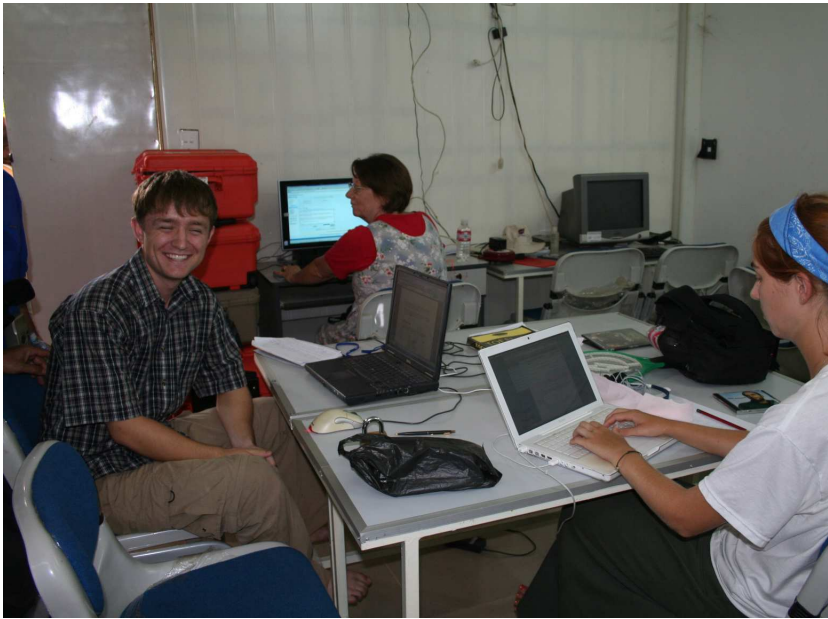
Some facts about Cambodia which require restating:

- 80% of deaths in Cambodia are due to water borne illness.
- Diarrhea is one of the leading killers in developing countries.
- A UN study showed that the BEST way to improve learning at Cambodian schools was to provide bathrooms!
- Naturally occurring arsenic in the ground water has caused sickness of epidemic proportions in Cambodia in recent years. This has only recently been discovered and long-term effects are still unknown.
- RDI is the leading laboratory in arsenic research in the country

Cambodia is amongst the poorest countries in the world, ranking 130 of 175 countries in the 2002 Human Development Index, as reported by the United Nations. According to the US Department of State, GDP per capita in 2002 was \$275. Life expectancy for men is around 54 and for women is 59, which reflects various factors, including high infant mortality rate and low living standards. It is estimated that 74% of all deaths in Cambodia come from waterborne diseases, a situation that could be improved through better sanitary conditions and education.



Cambodia also faces challenges related to population demographics (43% of the population is aged 15 or less) and the decimation of the skilled/educated sector of society during the Khmer Rouge period of 1975-79. Estimates of the genocide vary, but Kiernan (1995, *The Pol Pot Regime*) suggested about 1.67 million people, or 21% of the population perished during this period. Despite the recent history, many reports have guarded optimism regarding the socio-economic improvements for the country.



It has been our observation that Cambodia is at a pivotal point in its history. There appears to be a genuine interest on the part of the government and institutions of higher learning to improve education standards and delivery as means to socio-economic improvement. It is against this background that our visit was undertaken.

4.2 Clean Water a Critical Need

It is a well known fact that health is a top priority within the scale of human needs. Without a chance for a life without the constant threat of death and disease Cambodians cannot enjoy choices that other people take for granted.

Water health is of paramount importance. By supplying Cambodians with safe ground, well, and rain water, disease and sickness can be curtailed dramatically. Without proper [education](#) however, a clean water supply can be easily spoiled. Continued [research](#) helps sustain ongoing water health solutions. In this way RDI Cambodia maintains a [holistic and realistic approach](#) to the *overall* well-being of the people of Cambodia. The overall needs include:

1. Water testing equipment.
2. Volunteer teams to build purification systems and teach water education.
3. Workers with water expertise.
4. Lab equipment
5. Additional partnerships

4.3 The Ceramic Filtration System

The ceramic filtration system is made by following a series of step as shown below.

Two common resources are collected and used as the primary ingredients in our ceramic pots. Clay and rice husks. Clay is an abundant resource in Cambodia. By breaking up sun dried bricks, and hammering them in a mill, we produce a fine clay powder. Similarly, we take a byproduct of rice, the hulls, which are readily available, and hammer and sift them to the appropriate size.



These two ingredients (18% rice, 82% clay) are mixed with water in a modified mortar mixer then kneaded into 10kg pieces.



The 10kg clay mixture is then put in an aluminum caste and pressed in either a manual or hydraulic press to form the water pot shape.





The pots are stamped to track productivity and viability, cleaned and then air dried.



After they are dried they are fired in a traditional kiln. Temperatures are slowly raised to 832 degrees centigrade.



The pots cool and then undergo final testing of flow rate to make sure the pores in the pot are big enough to allow for fairly quick seepage, yet small enough to effectively filter harmful bacteria.



When tests are complete the pots are coated inside and out with colloidal silver to add an additional protective bacterial killing component.



4.4 Rain water Harvesting Schemes

With the considerable risk of arsenic poisoning in deep wells, RDIC have identified shallow wells and rainwater harvesting in conjunction with the ceramic filters as a way forward for the rural communities of Cambodia. This is a tangible goal for project support and RC Damansara will spend the next 6 months developing this approach into a meaningful project for support in conjunction with RDIC and Rotary Club of Phnom Pehn. Our initial focus will be on rural schools, as a community based programme will require a considerable amount of resources and monitoring which is beyond our present capacity.

A Typical Rain Water harvesting Set Up is shown below and according to RDIC an investment of US \$ 2,000 will provide 1 tank with the gutter system to collect water for daily usage. A typical example of this is a school as shown below.



Most of these tanks are attached to a roof by a gutter to collect the water. The image on the left shows how a tank is usually attached to a house.



A reliable source of clean drinking water is also needed at schools. Rainwater harvesting tanks like the one pictured can be built on site for about US\$1500.



Rainwater Harvesting Tank with Rovai Pump with a well beside it.

5.0 Visit to the Good Day Center

On our way from AAD to CMAC we visited a Vocational Skill Training & Rehabilitation Centre for orphans. The Interactors distributed stationary, Colour Pencils and Soft Toys to the kids. As the photos below illustrate this was very well received.



6.0 Conclusion

The Rotary Club of Damansara was chartered in 1980 and since its inception, has endeavoured to serve the local and international community. The club has carried out various projects which have benefited various sections of the community and among the more notable projects include the following:

- a) The establishment of a Dialysis Centre costing approximately RM750,000 for those with end-stage renal failure and who are unable to afford treatment.
- b) A road safety campaign for schools in the Damansara and Petaling Jaya area to highlight awareness of road safety.
- c) "Keeping Children In School" for poor students in the Sentul area by providing them with breakfast daily and school books and educational paraphernalia such as uniforms. This is an ongoing project.
- d) Tuition classes for pupils from poor families in Sentul and the Bangsar areas to prepare them for the UPSR exams. This project has been undertaken with the support of the HSBC Bank Malaysia Berhad.
- e) Year end Christmas Cheers for children from orphanages in the Klang Valley for the past decade, where they are given a treat at a Hotel and also school bags and stationery. Children who are mentally challenged are also invited to participate. This has been done with the support of the Sheraton hotel Subang Jaya.

We have carried out these projects in the firm belief that our continued well being and way of life is possible only if the world community also thrives.

The Cambodian Initiative for Land Mine Victims and Water Resources recognises two of the most important legacies of the Cambodian war. The question of the basic water resource development in Cambodia has to take a particular view of the serious problem of arsenic poisoning in the deep aquifers of Cambodia. We hope to develop these initiatives in conjunction with AAD and RDIC into sustainable long term projects over the next year together with our Interactors. The project has been carried with some interest in the Local press following a press conference organized by RC Damansara in conjunction with elc interactors on 19th July 2007.