

## TYPHOON KETSANA HITS VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

**R**eaders may have seen in the newspaper or on television news that at the end of September Indonesia, Samoa, the Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia were all devastated by natural disasters. As you may be concerned as to how they have affected our projects in South-East Asia, we have gathered some details below from our contacts at Helping Hands in Cambodia and the Red Cross in Vietnam.

### CAMBODIA

On 30th September Typhoon Ketsana slammed into Cambodia: it was the worst storm in living memory and caused widespread flooding across the country. Over 60,000 Cambodians have been affected and although the official death toll is only 17, the authorities and emergency workers have been struggling to reach the most remote areas. Vast stretches of the country are still cut off and Oxfam estimates that as many as 50,000 hectares of rice paddies may have been destroyed which could trigger serious long-term food shortages.



The five villages around Siem Reap where Helping Hands operates were completely cut off, and it was a full week before fieldworkers were able to return to the villages to assess the situation. Helping Hands fieldworkers Chanty and Thea had to abandon their motorbikes and swim across swollen rivers to reach some of the communities. Fortunately there was no loss of life in the villages and there was not too much damage to the rice crops. But as usual it is the poorest people who will suffer most, as they have small plots of land and a small loss could be devastating to their livelihoods.

Many people from these villages ride their bicycles into Siem Reap to work as labourers on construction sites. But, because of the economic crisis and the downturn in tourism, such work is harder to find. Now the

floods have cut off their villages so they can't get to Siem Reap to work.

The Commune Leader told Chanty and Thea that virtually every road has sustained major damage. Helping Hands has helped the villagers build many roads as part of their 'work for a bike' scheme and now all of them need major

repairs. The Commune Leader was also concerned that the damage to the roads meant that children could not get to school and his immediate priority was to find a way to construct some makeshift bridges.

It is too early to assess all the damage but Helping Hands initial response is to help get the roads passable again, but this won't be possible until the things dry out more. They plan to get the villagers to rebuild the roads and to pay them in rice, thereby providing for them in the short term.

### VIETNAM

Typhoon Ketsana had struck Vietnam the day before, with winds of up to 160 kph sweeping through twelve provinces causing widespread

continued from page 1

destruction, from Thanh Hoa in the north to Gia Lai in central Vietnam. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies estimate that about one and a half million people were directly affected.

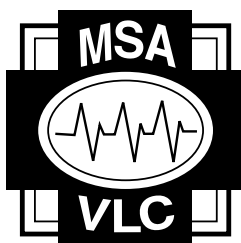
Latest figure from the government's disaster co-ordinating agency indicate that 163 people have been killed, 11 are still missing and 629 were injured due to the typhoon. Some 21,600 homes have been destroyed and over half a million homes damaged or flooded. Over five thousand classrooms have been destroyed and agricultural damage is high with fields under water and harvests washed away.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has travelled across the area to evaluate the situation and carry out distribution of household kits, rice, hygiene and food parcels. They have launched a \$5 million international appeal, and many national Red Cross societies have responded including those in Britain, America, Canada, France and Spain.

In terms of needs, rice is the main priority, but provision of clean water and sanitation are also important, as is the promotion of good health and hygiene practices to limit the spread of disease. The Federation also plans to focus on longer term goals such as disaster risk reduction and providing technical and practical agricultural support.

Due to the enormity of the problems in the region the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) is coordinating the appeal in Britain, channelling donations quickly to the most needy in the stricken countries. MSAVLC supporters are encouraged to send their donations directly through the DEC.

*Peter Lidgard  
Hon Secretary*



## HELPING HANDS, CAMBODIA

**O**ver recent years MSAVLC has made grants to Helping Hands, Cambodia to support their "Hand Washing" and "Breakfast Club" projects. During our visit to South East Asia, in March and April of this year we took the opportunity of visiting the projects and witnessing for ourselves the benefits to the village communities.

But Helping Hands is not just about personal hygiene and food, they work with the villagers to help them to improve their own facilities. The article below is taken from the most recent newsletter from Helping Hands and describes how this great project is offering a "hand up" rather than a "hand out".



*Project Founder Deborah Groves and Project Director Ho Chanty celebrating with villagers the provision of the first 1000 bikes*

**O**ur very successful "Work for a Bicycle" programme continues and we've now given out more than 1,250 bikes. The programme aims to equip every household in a village with a bicycle in return for a member of that household doing 5 days labour on either repairing, or building a new road, within their village. A bicycle is an invaluable item of family equipment. It provides members enhanced access to jobs, school, medical care and economic opportunities.

Another valuable benefit of having a bike is the time saved walking from place to place, allowing people to spend their time more effectively.

By ensuring the villagers earn their bike in return for their labour we are ensuring they maintain their dignity and a sense of being able to

help themselves. The success and value of this approach has been recently highlighted in the village of Doun Keo, where we are currently implementing this programme. After completing 5 days work, which entitled them to a bike, the people were so pleased with the results of their efforts that they decided to work on another road. At the time of writing they have all completed 13 days of work (instead of the usual 5) and have built four roads. Our only input is the provision of concrete pipes, bricks, cement, etc, to enable them to build small bridges and causeways. We are more than happy to provide them with these materials.

*Of course, now many of those roads are now in desperate need of repair, but fortunately all of our bridges and causeways held up well in the floods.*

# INCUBATORS FOR HA TINH HOSPITAL



*From this...*

unit to find that the one and only incubator that they had was now broken and awaiting repair. During the recent cold spell twenty premature babies had been born, and the incubator had been used for up to three children at a time! Now they had nothing and they were caring for premature babies who were in desperate need. Two of the worst ones, tiny little mites, were laid on a bed and kept warm by a one-bar electric fire, balanced precariously on the end of the bed. They were

**I**n March 2008 Peter and Mary Lidgard visited the Paediatric Ward at Ha Tinh Provincial Hospital and were quite shocked at what they saw. They returned in March 2009 with Peter and Sheila Lacy and Dr. Madeleine Sharp to see what progress had been made.

Ha Tinh is the poorest province in Vietnam and experiences many difficulties. It has poor infrastructure, bad weather, poor soil, and there remain many relics from the American war and many Agent Orange victims. The province frequently experiences serious typhoons, causing loss of life and damage to buildings. The people are poor and life is hard.

Ha Tinh General Hospital caters for over a million people from the ten districts within the province. It is a very old building with leaking roofs and poor sanitation. A new wing is to be built with money from Central Government, but the present hospital is old, damp and desperately short of equipment. The Director, Dr Pham told us that they receive little financial assistance from external sources.

The hospital staff is well-educated and experienced and many of them were trained at Hanoi University. We discussed with them their main problems and the difficulties they experienced. All of the most serious cases in the ten districts in the province, including Ky Anh, are dealt with here, along with operations for hare-lips, cataracts and general surgery. The number of patients treated exceeds the number of beds available and we felt that the staff was doing a remarkable job with very many difficulties and a dreadful lack of equipment and resources.

We visited the paediatric special care

cocooned in towels and blankets with just a tiny bit of head showing and were connected to tubes and drips. Three others were laid on a tray together and two were laid separately with oxygen and drainage. The staff were loving and dedicated and were doing their best to nurse the children despite the difficult circumstances.

We could see that they desperately needed new incubators. They were waiting for the broken one to be repaired but for a province this size, catering for 1.3 million people; they told us that ten incubators would be the more realistic figure!

The cost to supply one incubator in Vietnam is about £7,500 and following our last visit we started to raise funds for

one by selling Vietnamese goods and asking our friends for donations. Whilst we were able to raise over £3,000 in this way, we were aware that babies could be dying for want of incubators. We therefore asked the Executive Committee to direct funds for this project and, on hearing of the problem they were very glad to support it.

Two incubators were purchased for the hospital with funds supplied by MSAVLC, in August 2008 and we were subsequently informed that they had been delivered and installed in the paediatric ward.

In March 2009 we returned to the hospital with Peter and Sheila Lacy and Dr. Madeleine Sharp and we met with the vice-director, Dr. Le Que. We were given the receipts for the two incubators which had been purchased. Dr Le Que told us that as there was some money left over the hospital had purchased two negative pressure machines for use in the department of obstetrics and the department of paediatrics. All the paperwork was given to us for inspection.

We then visited the paediatric intensive care unit and were thrilled to see the two new incubators in use. They had in fact been overused, as at busy times they had, again, housed two or three babies at a time. We met a young couple who were taking their little girl home that day. She had been born two months prematurely and had spent the first month of her life in one of the incubators.

When the incubators had arrived at Ha Tinh, a doctor from the staff had been sent to Hanoi to learn how to operate them correctly and he had then taught the rest of the staff. We asked about maintenance



*...To this*

and were told that the hospital engineers would regularly service the machines. The staff was very grateful and told us that there had already been a reduction in the number of infant deaths on the ward.

It is most gratifying to know that the provision of these two machines, funded entirely from donations by MSAVLC supporters, means that premature babies' lives are being saved. However, the hospital is still in desperate need of more incubators, particularly as the winter approaches.

*Mary and Peter Lidgard*

# NEWS FROM TUA CHUA DISTRICT OPENING OF TRAINING COURSE FOR TRADITIONAL MIDWIVES

**T**he following two letters have been received recently from Prof. Trinh. They are reproduced to show the feelings of the people of the Northern Highlands for the support of MSAVLC

Dear Mr. Peter Lidgard

I am very pleased to inform you that I have gone to Tua Chua district, Dien Bien Province to attend the opening of the midwives training course. I was very moved in front of a hundreds midwives wearing their colourful traditional costumes, especially H'mong and Dao people. They even had musical instruments wearing in their ears, necks and wrists and it made interesting music when they were walking around in the opening of the training. And they also sang their traditional songs before the training. It was very vivid. I will send you the photos and the CD in December during my visit London to work with some universities and hospitals to discuss about our next projects that they agreed to fund HEDO in 2010.

In the opening of midwives training, I read your letter to the midwives. The whole hall clapped their hands for the good ideas of MSA.VLC and your ideas and they were very moved when you reminded them to learn hard to serve their community to improve the quality of reproductive health and quality of population.

They also welcomed your ideas about learning the new knowledge but not forgetting their own culture and tradition.

They sent their thanks to MSA.VLC and the joint hon-secretary Mr. Peter Lidgard. They also gave MSA.VLC presents such as scarfs and beautiful embroidered bags. I will send their presents to you when I go to London in December. These are small presents but full of their emotion. The director of Tua Chua Healthcare Centre on behalf of 100 midwives read the thanking

letter to MSA.VLC and you. All of them stood up and clapped their hands when the doctor, director of Healthcare Center Mr. Vu A Su, H'mong finished reading the letter. I will enclose the letter to this email.

Trinh Ngoc Trinh  
Director of HEDO

can serve our villages and communities with all of our knowledge our strength and power. We would like to give you our sincere thanks, your joint secretary and all of your colleagues at the Medical and Scientific Aids for Vietnam, Lao, Cambodia.

We wish you to continue your



support to mothers, children and all of the traditional midwives in Tua Chua district.

Dear Mr. Peter Lidgard,

Copy to: Medical Scientific Aids for Vietnam, Lao and Cambodia (MSA.VLC).

The letter that you sent to the midwives in Tua Chua district, Dien Bien province that Prof. Trinh Ngoc Trinh read to us was really moved.

From the United Kingdom where is half of the earth to Vietnam, MSA.VLC has cooperated with Prof. Trinh and HEDO and funded Tua Chua district and many other districts in the Highland areas of Vietnam, training midwives to help young ethnic minority mothers giving birth at home safely. That is a very charitable work.

All of our class including 100 midwives promises to learn well and hard so that when we come back we

On behalf of the class  
On behalf of Healthcare Centre of Tua Chua District  
Dien Bien Province

Vu A Su  
Director



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



**This year's delayed AGM was held at the House of Commons on Monday November 2nd. The venue was arranged by Chris Mullin MP who also took the chair for the majority of the meeting before being called away to an important parliamentary committee meeting.**

In welcoming everyone to the meeting Chris made particular mention of Madeleine Sharp, whose hospitalisation had caused the postponement of the AGM arranged for July 2009, saying how good it was to see Madeleine back on her feet. Chris also reminded the meeting that he would be standing down as a

Member of Parliament at the next General Election and that we should be looking to elect a new Chairman of the Charity.

In what was to be her final report as Hon. Secretary, Madeleine Sharp made reference to the changing fortunes of the charity during 2008. The legacy left to us by Prof. Grant Lathe means that the work of the charity will be secured for the near future.

2008 had seen £92,407 sent in aid to the benefit of eleven projects or organisations across the region, a significant increase on recent years grants.

The election of officers for the

charity saw just one change with Madeleine stepping down as Joint Hon. Secretary and being nominated as Joint President, she will remain as a member of the Executive Committee with Peter Lidgard now assuming full responsibility in the post of Hon. Secretary.

Changes to the executive committee included the retirements of Shirley Hepple and Ted Shellard and the introduction of new members Dr Neil Goulbourne, Ben Sullivan and Valerie Souza-Lewis. Our thanks and best wishes were extended to both retiring members and a warm welcome given to the new members.

---

## MSAVLC PUBLICATIONS

### **Forty Years of Devoted Support**

(E. J. Shellard)

**£5.00**

We still have some copies of earlier accounts of MSAVLC's activities, Part 1 covering 1965-1990, and Part 2 covering 1990 to 2000

**£3.50 each**

**£5.00 for both**

### **Short History of MSAVLC**

(1965 - 1985)

(Joan McMichael-Askins)

**£3.50**

(1985 - 1990)

(Madeleine Sharp)

**£1.50.**

(1990 - 1995)

(E. J. Shellard)

**£1.50**

### **Children of Vietnam**

(pub. 1968 by MACV)

Reprinted 2003

**£5.00** (£2.50 concessions)

### **Courage**

An account of the lives of Elizabeth Adelaide and Donald Adolphus Brown (parents of Win Langthorn)

**£5.00**

*All may be obtained from Dr. Madeleine Sharp, 49 Baginton Road, Coventry CV3 6JX*

**Please make cheques payable to MSAVLC**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**The financial report presented to this year's Annual General Meeting showed a much healthier balance sheet than we have experienced for many long years.**

Fundraising events coupled with the generosity of our many valuable donors has meant that our normal income for 2008 was much higher than in previous years. The figure of £120,000, of restricted and unrestricted funds is one of which we can be rightly proud.

You might imagine, therefore, our somewhat mixed feelings when we heard of the death of one of the founder members of Medical Aid for Vietnam, Grant Lathe.

Grant's daughter rang to tell us of her father's death and to inform us that he had left the charity the proceeds of the sale of his house.

When the sale had been completed the charity's coffers had been increased by over £412,000.

Following a number of years where the Executive Committee has struggled to ensure that promises of support to existing projects could be met we now face a different challenge, that of ensuring that Grant's legacy is used effectively for the benefit of the people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

That work is already under way with the agreement with the British Friendship Hospital, in Ky Anh, to equip a Special Care Ward Unit to be named after Grant Lathe.

The development of this new facility will mean that premature babies and others in need of special care will no longer have to face the trauma of transfer to Ha Tinh for the treatment they require.

A new generation of children in Ky Anh will benefit from a better start to life thanks to Grant's generosity. We will keep you informed of the progress being made with the new ward.

Whilst talking about our finances it is worth noting that the cost of running the charity is only around 5% of the total expenditure and fundraising costs amount to less than 4% of the money raised (excluding legacies), figures which compare very favourably with many other charitable organisations.

Finally, on behalf of the charity, I would like to extend Season's Greetings to all our friends and supporters, and look forward to a very successful and rewarding 2010.

*Peter Lacy  
Chairman of the Executive  
Committee*

---

## Season's Greetings



*With Best Wishes  
for  
Christmas  
and the  
New Year  
from  
The Executive  
Committee  
Of  
MSAVLC*

---

**Published by:**  
Medical & Scientific Aid for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia,  
49 Baginton Road, Coventry CV3 6JX  
Telephone 024 7641 4512  
Registered Charity No. 252906

Printed by Sharpe Media, Unit 1, Building 8/9, Bilton Industrial Estate, Humber Avenue, Coventry CV3 1JL  
Telephone: 024 7645 8833 Fax: 024 7645 9933

**VIETNAM, LAOS & CAMBODIA MEDICAL &  
SCIENTIFIC AID NEWS BULLETIN**  
Editor: Peter Lacy  
404 Tile Hill lane, Coventry, CV4 9DJ  
Telephone: 024 7646 2259  
Email: peter.lacy@whitefriarshousing.co.uk