



Citoyen(ne)s de Siem Reap pour la Santé, de l'Éducation et les Questions Sociales

SiRCHESI's NEWSLETTER: JAN., 2010

Siem Reap, Cambodia, adjacent to the Angkor Wat temples, attracted over 2,000,000 visitors in 2008; tourism is this provincial capital's leading industry. **SiRCHESI** (**Siem Reap Citizens for Health, Education-al and Social Issues**) is a non-profit, non-religious, non-political and non-governmental organization (**NGO**) formed in Cambodia in 2000. It finances its activities independently through grants and private and corporate donations. Many resources for the health system must be provided by NGOs such as SiRCHESI, Doctors without Borders (MSF), or foundation-supported Angkor Childrens' Hospital and Khanta Bhopa III Hospital. NGOs continue to deal with education, human rights, gender and micro-economic development issues.

SiRCHESI IMPACT ON LOCAL HEALTH PROJECTS

Beginning in 2000, SiRCHESI brought together concerned citizens, business persons, and community health and medical workers, while forging links to local and international resources, and research and practice expertise. Our multi-sectorial approach to community health-promotion targets HIV/AIDS and alcohol abuse, as well as reducing violence and trafficking for women and children. In 2002, SiRCHESI began creating effective, innovative, and proactive workshops and outreach programs. In 2006, SiRCHESI opened a small school to help create new careers for 30 women in the healthier workplaces of large hotels. Our programs also focus on gender equity, literacy and education, improving workplace health and safety, improving economic security and welfare, and prevention of the sexual exploitation and trafficking of young women and men, boys and girls. A Participatory Action Research (**PAR**) approach guides SiRCHESI's creation and monitoring of new health promotion projects. SiRCHESI helps strengthen local infra-structure, through its "**hybrid model of capacity building**". Our NGO staff wear two hats, retaining their public service positions, with flex-time scheduling.

Dr. Sarath Kros is SiRCHESI's part-time NGO Program Director and supervises 6 part-time staff, and a network of 21 peer-educator outreach workers

who taught reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention to over 8700 persons in 2009. As well, SiRCHESI provides valuable educational experiences for students and interns from 5 countries; they in turn have helped train the local staff in research and statistical skills. (See the website: www.angkorwatngo.com).

WHY IS THE HEALTH CRISIS STILL SO DEADLY?

While SiRCHESI focused initially on HIV/AIDS prevention programs for high-risk groups, it soon became apparent that many other factors were increasing the vulnerability of groups of women such as those selling international beer brands in restaurants. SiRCHESI has prodded global/international corporations profitably doing business in Cambodia to provide living wages, health education, safe work places and HAART for their HIV+ employees (e.g., the beer promotion women for international beer brands have had an HIV+ prevalence rate varying about 20.5% ,1995-2003). Their story and SiRCHESI's research and press reports, can be found online at websites www.fairtradebeer.com, www.ethicalbeer.com or www.beergirls.org. See the recent study by Green & Lubek (2010) about the plight of beersellers in 2009, still working in a "toxic" workplace and drinking more than 6 standard drinks nightly, a hazardous and harmful amount. In 2006, SiRCHESI's Hotel Apprenticeship Program began "rescuing" women from the entertainment industry and placed 30 in safer workplaces in hotels, with a \$110 living wage; in 2010, we are still monitoring the progress and life changes of more than half of the original students with in-depth interviews. Their story has been told by Pollock (2008, on the websites) and in a forthcoming article by Helen Lee et al (in press) in the *Journal of Health Psychology*. Our 2009 NGO Annual Meeting was held in February, 2010, and we reviewed our continuing health education initiatives and our challenging financial situation; major grant financing ended in Jan, 2009, and much effort was devoted to raising funds from small research grants and private donors throughout 2010. A grant from Canada's IDRC has helped most recently. Our colleagues from the public health system note that the rate of new HIV infections has come down in Siem Reap in most risk groups, especially in the last 4 years, 2006-09.

To contact SiRCHESI:

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WHAT CAN YOUR GIFTS CONCRETELY DO?

- i) \$200 provides a complete workshop for 70 young souvenir vendors at Angkor Wat against risks of sexual predators;
- ii) \$200 provides one intensive HIV/AIDS , reproductive health and alcohol overuse workshop for 30 entertainment industry workers selling beer, or restaurant hostesses at risk for HIV/AIDS
- iii) \$140 pays the monthly salaries of 1 of our 6 SiRCHESI staff members
- iv) \$100 provides for one of our 21 peer-educator outreach workers to reach, in 4 months, 140 rural women and men with health promotion information about reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, etc.
- v) \$50 provides 10 workplace health and safety interventions (with breathalyzer testing) for women workers in dangerous situations and men thinking about driving their vehicles home
- vi) \$25 provides a monthly fellowship supplement to 1 of our 15 continuing SiRCHESI school graduates still working in their hotel positions, 3 years after starting in 2006-7,

HERE'S HOW TO TAKE **DIRECT ACTION** to support our Cambodia HIV/AIDS prevention program:

A) MASTERCARD or VISA: Please go to one of our websites and press: "Donate now" or go straight to:

http://www.alumni.uoguelph.ca/cgi-bin/online_giving.pl page at University of Guelph, whose charity registration number is **10816 1829 RR 0001**. They process all donations for our Cambodia project and issue Tax Receipts for Canada and the USA.

- 1) Indicate the amount of your donation in Canadian dollars (Indicate this is **not** a recurring PLEDGE) .
- 2) **Uncheck** the default "Donation to University of Guelph's Highest priorities"
- 3) Select: **"Other" Funds and then enter: HIV/AIDS Cambodia Project**
- 4) Fill in your return mailing address; a charitable donation receipt (REVENUE CANADA) will be sent in February.
- 5) In the box **"Any other special information regarding the donation"** you may indicate dedications, etc.
- 6) Your secure credit card donation, in Canadian dollars, will then be recorded by **Mira-Pay** and a printable email receipt will follow immediately from AA&D [Alumni Affairs and Development] UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH and Mira-Pay.

B) By CHEQUE: Please make out to: "University of Guelph" with the notation HIV/AIDS Charitable Donation /Cambodia added in the bottom left corner of the cheque, and send to Paul Hossie, Manager, Financial Services, Alumni Affairs & Development, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1, CANADA.

C) FOR U.S. DONORS REQUIRING AN IRS TAX RECEIPT, please send a cheque or money order in US dollars, made out to: **FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH**. with the notation HIV/AIDS Charitable Donation /Cambodia added in the bottom left corner. Send to Paul Hossie, Manager, Financial Services, Alumni Affairs & Development, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1, CANADA.

For additional donation information or help, please contact: Paul Hossie, phossie@uoguelph.ca, Tel: 519-824-4120 ext. 53605, Fax: 519-822-2670

WHEN YOU HAVE MADE YOUR DONATION, please email ilubek@uoguelph.ca with the date and amount, and I will verify the details with Paul Hossie.

Ian Lubek can be reached at ilubek@uoguelph.ca or via SKYPE phone: ilubek