



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

SiRCHESI's NEWSLETTER: JAN., 2011

SiRCHESI (Siem Reap Citizens for Health, Educational and Social Issues) is a non-profit, non-religious, non-political and non-governmental organization (NGO) formed in Cambodia in 2000. Siem Reap, a provincial capital, is adjacent to the Angkor Wat temples, which attract almost 2,000,000 visitors annually. Tourism here is the leading industry. SiRCHESI finances its health-related activities independently through grants, private gifts and corporate donations. Many resources for the health system in CAMBODIA must still be provided by NGO partners such as: **SiRCHESI**; Doctors without Borders (MSF); the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and foundation-supported Angkor Childrens' Hospital and Khanta Bhopa Hospitals. NGOs continue to deal with education, human rights, gender equity, labour rights, and micro-economic development.

SiRCHESI's LOCAL HEALTH PROJECTS (2000-11)

In 2000, SiRCHESI first began bringing together, into one NGO, concerned citizens, business persons, and community health and medical workers to confront locally the HIV/AIDS pandemic. At the time, Siem Reap had one of the highest prevalence rates for key HIV risk groups in Cambodia, and Cambodia had the highest rates in South-East Asia. SiRCHESI forged links to local and international resources, and invited researcher/practitioner experts to help, pro bono, solve the health (and related) community challenges--HIV/AIDS prevention, community health monitoring, rural outreach, alcohol abuse, workplace violence, trafficking, and women's literacy. From the outset, we used a multi-sectorial, multi-disciplinary approach to community health-promotion, through PAR (Participatory Action Research). In 2006, SiRCSI founded a school to facilitate long-term, financially secure career paths for 26 women in the safer, healthier workplaces of large hotels. Four years later, we continued to monitor the job-satisfaction of 16 of these women and their career and family histories. Their stories have been told by Pollock (2008), Green (in progress) and in an article by Helen Lee et al (2010) in the *Journal of Health Psychology*.

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; he recently took post-grad courses at Brown University, on a Fogarty HIV/AIDS Fellowship. He supervises 5 part-time staff, 5 trained per-diem inter-viewers, and 21 peer-educator outreach workers, who taught reproductive health, alcohol and HIV/AIDS prevention to over 9000 persons in 2010. SiRCHESI also provides valuable educational experiences to students and interns from 5 countries; they in turn trained 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, we soon learned that many other factors increased the vulnerability of groups of women such as those selling international beer brands in bars and restaurants. SiRCHESI continues to prod the Cambodian professional beer-selling association (BSIC) and the parent global brewers 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). The slow, incomplete response of the industry means SiRCHESI must continue to be a primary/first source of health information to beer sellers and hostesses. SiRCHESI has sent information about workplace risks since 2002 to corporate directors of major brands such as Stella Artois, Beck's, Bass Ale, Budweiser (AB/INBEV), Heineken, Tiger, Carlsberg, San Miguel, etc. Since 2006, SiRCHESI's data have supported ethical shareholders' groups and NGOs concerned about the unsafe workplaces for sellers of Heineken, Tiger, etc. View SiRCHESI's research/press reports at www.fairtradebeer.com, www.ethicalbeer.com or www.beergirls.org. The plight of beersellers in 2009 (Green & Lubek, 2010) features "toxic" workplaces with more than 6 standard drinks consumed nightly--a hazardous/harmful amount.

SiRCHESI's 2009 NGO Annual Meeting was held in February, 2010, and we reviewed our continuing health initiatives and the challenging financial situation. In Aug., 2010, a union local of the Cambodian Food Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF) was formed and saw the election of former beer-seller and SiRCHESI interviewer Ms. Sophear Phaal as its first president. SiRCHESI's data on workplace danger can now be transmitted to international union headquarters for direct action. In October, in conjunction with the Steven Lewis Foundation for HIV/AIDS in Africa, SiRCHESI raised over \$1800 for both Cambodia and Africa auctioning more than 509 fair trade bracelets from Siem Reap.

To contact SiRCHESI:

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WHAT CAN YOUR GIFTS CONCRETELY DO? (we can send you recent photos!!)

Some examples:

- i) \$25 provides 5 workplace health/safety interventions (with breathalyzer testing) for women in dangerous situations
- ii) \$50 provides 10 persons at risk with a complete health workshop on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, alcohol overuse.
- iii) \$100 allows 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.
- iv) \$140 pays the monthly salary of 1 of our 5 SiRCHESI staff members
- v) \$200 provides a complete workshop for 70 young souvenir vendors at Angkor Wat on risks of sexual predators, HIV/AIDS and child-trafficking;
- vi) \$250 pays for 250 behavioural monitoring interviews at the local HIV/AIDS-testing health center,
- vii) \$2100 pays all salaries and expenses for SiRCHESI for one month's health promotion activities



1) Workplace interviews/breathalyzer tests by SiRCHESI staff and international volunteers

2) CFSWF Union Executive elected, Ms. Sophear Phaal, left, President (Aug. 2010)

3) Beersellers still in unsafe workplaces, chronically underpaid, most still drinking nightly with customers (Aug. 2010)

HERE'S HOW TO DONATE to SiRCHESI's Cambodia HIV/AIDS prevention program:

i) FOR CANADIANS (or US DONORS NOT REQUIRING AN IRS TAX RECEIPT):

A) MASTERCARD or VISA: Go straight to http://www.alumni.uoguelph.ca/cgi-bin/online_giving.pl page at University of Guelph, where you'll now find the charitable donations program renamed **:THE BETTER PLANET Program** (whose charity registration number is still **10816 1829 RR 0001.**) They process all donations for our Cambodia project and issue Tax Receipts for Canada (see below for USA).

1) Press Donate now-- **one time gift.**

2) CHECK THE SMALL BOX: **I PREFER TO SUPPORT AN AREA NOT LISTED ABOVE:** A small box will appear indicating : MY PREFERRED FUND:

3) PLEASE write in : *CAMBODIAN HIV/AIDS Project* (and add any special information regarding the donation, such as dedications, in memorium, etc.)

4) Fill in the Amount of your gift (in Canadian Dollars).

5) Fill in return mailing address; a charitable donation receipt (CANADA REVENUE AGENCY) is sent there in February or to your email address as a pdf -file receipt.

6) Your credit card donation, in Canadian dollars, will then be recorded by **the secure system** and a printable email receipt will follow from the UNIVERSITY of GUELPH, almost instantly.

ii) For CANADIAN DONORS wishing to use a CHEQUE:

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. Include address and email for receipt.

iii) 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. Include contact information and email for receipts sent in February.

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; we will verify that the funds are directed to SiRCHESI. ***THANKS TO ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.***