



QSA NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to this QSA Newsletter. In this edition we will share with you something of the impact of an earlier project based in Cambodia. Authors Heather Saville and Mardi Naulty

People and Places

"NGO's are the human face of Australian aid"

An exhibition currently in London Circuit, Canberra until late April celebrates the 40th Anniversary Exhibition of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), which is one of a number of ways that the Australian Government supports communities overseas. The ANCP funding is made available to development agencies such as Quaker Service Australia, who are accredited with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, formerly AusAID. This story about a particularly successful project however goes back even further, to the days of AIDAB, the Development Assistance Bureau.

The Kampuchea of the mid-1980s at the start of this project, was very different from the Cambodia of 1993, when it ended. The country was effectively closed to the western world, except for a small number of western aid agencies, and had barely recovered from the devastation of the Khmer Rouge period. Teachers, academics and intellectuals were either dead, in exile, or still very traumatised by their experiences.

As the devastation wrought on Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge era dawned upon the world, English was becoming more important in South East Asia. Few Cambodians had English language skills, so in 1985 QSA began developing a Cambodian English Language Training (CELT) Project. Political objections prevented bilateral aid projects, but the Australian government supported much-needed NGO projects until the Paris Peace Accords in October 1991. With AIDAB financial support, the first students enrolled at the Institute of Foreign Languages, University of Phnom Penh, in 1989. When QSA outlined this project in a submission to be included in the exhibition, it was selected as representing one of the earliest of Australia's ANCP aid projects.

Soon after, the United Nations recognised the government of Cambodia and Australia and was very active in supporting the deployment of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Following UN-supervised elections in May 1993, the new Cambodian government ended nearly a decade of political and economic isolation.

On 18 March 2015, Mardi Naulty and Heather Saville represented Quaker Service Australia at the opening of the ANCP Exhibition. Mardi writes 'It was an elegant occasion with representatives of many recipient NGOs in attendance, beautifully mounted enlarged photographs of some community development projects, and a trio of musicians. Speakers included the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tania Plibersek, and Dr Fred Muwanga, from the Fred Hollows Foundation.

ANCP currently supports 48 Australian NGOs, has a budget of \$134 million and will deliver over 615 community development projects in 56 countries. This year the focus will be on directly supporting community-level economic development, facilitating access to markets, improving livelihoods and education for women, and working to strengthen links between communities, government and the private sector.'



Tanya Plibersek, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Heather Saville at the ANCP exhibition in Canberra with QSA's photo of graduates of CELT in Cambodia. Photo credit Heather Saville

The Impact of this project

Long-term benefits of the CELT project are still visible. The inset of the photo shows the first group of Cambodian graduates of the Cambodian English Language Teaching Project (CELT). The main photo taken recently is of Mrs Suos Man, now Deputy Rector, Royal University of Phnom Penh and Mr May Tum, now Assistant Representative, Cambodia Country Office of UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities). They were among the first group of proud graduates from the QSA-supported four-year English Language Teaching course at the University of Phnom Penh. They commented that, "the QSA-CELT program came at a vital time for Cambodia, and gave each of us opportunities that we would not otherwise have been able to enjoy".



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