

Newsletter

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Health And
Development Aid Abroad
— Australia Fund Inc.
ABN 43 739 862 351

HADA'S VISION

To see medical, educational,
agricultural and sanitation
programs established in
countries as needed.

All projects listed in our News-
letter are tax deductible. All
monies for these projects and
personnel working on them
go in their entirety except for
bank charges. HADA does not
use these funds for admin-
istration.

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W-H-E-E-L-C-H-A-I-R Spells HOPE!

Bridgewater Care – China

Who can truly understand how it feels when all the doors of your life close tightly shut? When work disappears and finances are drained by medical costs, how does the added reality of a paralysed body bear down on a person and swallow up the hope of ever really living again? Add to that a society who has not even considered building a decent stretch of footpath in your city, let alone in your neighborhood, that can allow for wheelchair use or crutch walking. Instead, they've built pedestrian subways or overpasses at nearly every other street intersection in the center of the city and fences along the footpath which prevent street access, forcing all to climb up and down three flights just to cross a street. A home five flights up with no lift offers little possibility of getting outdoors again any time soon, maybe once or twice a year if you're fortunate. Family who at first were extremely attentive and took time from work to manage the hospital stay and initial home care, now need to return to their previous schedules and a stranger with no education or training is hired to take care of you 24 hours a day. Or a family member stops working which results in a sacrificial, meager life. From overhead, the ceiling stares down unrelentingly, and etched into your mind is certainly every crack and mark. Hope invisibly leaks away; those passing beyond the window remain untouched and unaware of the vanishing life within. Who cares? Who understands?

Multiply this by tens of thousands. If these lives so bereft of hope could somehow appear as rising smoke leaking from the windows of their homes, the province would be covered.

I sat on a stool a little lower than 30-year-old Yang looking up into his



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face as he was helped by a rehab aid to balance on a straight-back chair. He and his mother exist on very little in a small two-room apartment. He is confined to a hospital bed so generously provided by middle school friends who remember him still. For eleven years he has been there lying next to a two-meter wide window looking out between a major road 10 metres below and a highway overpass running parallel above. A diving accident rendered him paralysed from the shoulders down at 19, mercifully sparing some movement in his elbows and chest. Since we have been seeing him this past month he has been learning to balance again in a high-back chair and lift his arms. He looked at me with unbelief as I said he could learn to feed himself. Really? We have given him a wheelchair provided by

kind friends in a far away land who will never meet him, and now inspired by wheelchair and exercise his hopelessness has been challenged. He is beginning to have a remote idea of what his life might become and his heart is opening up.

We meet them: story after story of the desolate and abandoned, left to eke out some kind of existence behind closed doors. Then one day the door opens and in walk trained and caring rehab aids prepared to come daily; a wheelchair or wrist splints; something new to decrease their physical limitation . . . maybe there IS hope after all. Someone cares. Our thanks to HADA, and those who with wheelchairs and rehab resources encourage our friends in China not to give up hope!

From the Secretary

The HADA board wishes to thank you, the reader and supporter of our work through the last twelve months, on behalf of the overseas projects, listed each issue, and their beneficiaries, for your contributions to the work and the encouragement this has given to everyone to continue.

While we thank you, we also want to take note of the rapidly approaching Christmas season, and wish everyone a really wonderful Christmas. We know that the

world financial markets have turned upside down during the past six months, but our supporters have been loyal and we trust that, even if the rest of the world's economy is not as good as it could be, your compassion and willingness to 'lend a hand' financially will continue.

We endeavour to bring you news from each area of work throughout the year, but we depend on the personnel overseas for their reports, photographs and financial statements.

It never ceases to amaze us just how far the dollar will stretch — which reminds me of a question I (who was born in Holland) was asked when my wife and I returned from working for six months in Burundi, Central Africa.

The question: How was copper wire invented? The answer: Two Dutchmen fighting over a one cent coin.

Cheers, Kees Moolenschot.



Modern means of communication are wonderful and help make communicating so much faster, easier and cheaper.

Over a number of years we have built up our mailing list to about 1600 readers. Of these, approximately 1300 receive hard copies of the Newsletter (i.e. in the mail), and more than 300 receive theirs via email. If you would also like to receive your Newsletter earlier via email and save our postage costs we would be very happy to amend our database. Please advise us of your email address and postal address so that we can transfer your name from one list to the other. Our address is <hada@pobox.com>

Newsletter

It is HADA's desire to keep you informed of projects being supported and the needs of people in several faraway countries, therefore, we endeavour to grow our distribution of the Newsletter. If you are in a position to pass additional copies on to friends or like-minded people, please advise us and we will send you extra copies of the Newsletter. If on the other hand you already receive too much reading matter and prefer not to continue receiving our Newsletter, let us know and we will remove your name from the mail-out list.



Rotha (Metal Trade)

Vocational Training Apprenticeship Program

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Hope and a Future for Rotha!

Chum Reap Suer! (Greetings in the Khmer language). My name is Rotha and I am 18 years old. The streets of Boeng Tumpun in Phnom Penh were my workplace since I was seven years old. The market areas were the best places for scavenging plastic bottles and metal scraps so that I could sell them for money to give to my grandmother who looks after five other grandchildren. I never knew my parents; it was my grandmother who brought me up and she is too old and sick to work for a living. Sometimes when I had good 'finds' I would lose them all to other gangs. How I wished life was not so tough!

By the time I had a sponsorship to go to school, I was already 16 years old. I tried my best to fit into the class, but I felt embarrassed, and the other kids were much younger and smarter than me. So, I decided to quit school. Fortunately, I was given another chance . . .

My good friend introduced me to the Vocational Training Apprenticeship Program. He took me to visit the place and told me that this might be my only chance to make a difference to my life. The Metal Trade Supervisor, Mr Chhaya, explained that it is possible, if one is willing to work hard and put one's heart fully into it, to learn from the master of the trade.

As I walked around the metal trade workshop, I saw the workers producing all sorts of products – customised gates, stove-top metal ovens, metal frame furniture, playground sets. I was excited but also afraid! Can I ever be as skillful as them? I would like to own such a workshop in the future. Is this just a dream? Will this dream come true?

Since February 2008, I no longer comb the streets of Boeng Tumpun for metal scraps but produce metal work. Now I have a roof (that does not leak) over my head, and I do not worry about where my next meal will come from. My seniors were patient in teaching me the tricks of the trade. From my first day in this two-year residential apprenticeship program I haven't regretted being here. As a matter of fact, one of my fellow street friends is also in this program with me. Sometimes we miss the freedom of living on the streets but we realise that the discipline that we are undergoing now is for our own sake.

In the evenings I say my prayers for my grandmother and cousins; I missed them a lot initially, but we know that when I complete this training at the end of 2009, there is hope for my family and community. Thank you for your contribution towards the Vocational Training Apprenticeship Program in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Training for a *Brighter* Future in Kazakhstan

Many young men from villages and small towns are attracted to Astana, the new flourishing capital of Kazakhstan. They hear about the good salaries to be earned here, especially compared with the poor employment in the villages. Arriving in Astana is often an anti-climax though: living costs are very expensive and non-skilled jobs aren't paid much.

HADA-Astana's Skills Training and Employment Project, STEP for short, has been trying to make a difference by imparting practical skills to these people and making them more city-wise. Because of the building boom there is a high demand for skilled builders and craftsmen. Also, people have more money to make improvements to their old Soviet-style flats.

Talgat came out of a village in South Kazakhstan where he used to look after the sheep and cows of his father and neighbours. He joined the project early on, starting mainly with assisting the other guys and clearing up after them. Over time

he has learned how to tile, hang doors, build furniture and many other skills. Several years later he is learning to take on orders himself



— making cost estimates, planning the process, ordering the materials, billing the clients and completing the projects.

Training takes place in the context of real orders. Furniture has been produced in a workshop and many other practical jobs are done at the houses and flats of clients. High standards of quality are set from the beginning; better to do the job a bit slower and correctly, than cutting corners and having dissatisfied customers. For this

reason the project always has more requests than can be taken on. One of the challenging aspects is to see the men grow in their skills of working together and teaching each other. It is rewarding to see that over time they need less supervision and can work more independently.

Through STEP, many men have grown in their skills and have learned to deliver with a high quality standard. This has given them good job opportunities with building firms or they have even started their own businesses. One of them, Batir, is now running his own general contracting business taking on new, unfinished flats and making them ready for people to move in: laying floors, plastering walls, tiling and fitting bathrooms and kitchens etc.

The project was started in 2004 by David Graetz, and later, when he returned to Australia, handed over to Lane Friesen. Both have done great jobs and this is visible in the lives of those whom they have trained.

Soon this project will start a second life as an independent business that will carry out the training and equipping in a real business context, so that the men get even more experience in the commercial aspects of their work. It will also demonstrate that honest business pays off in the long run. Talgat will join Lane in starting this next chapter, with the goal of hiring others over time. We wish Lane and Talgat much success and enthusiasm for this next challenging step for STEP.