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 **World Renew Cambodia**
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Joh Lily and her husband are working together to create #enoughfood and #fruitfulwork!
bit.ly/2ftFyrQ
#AdventWord #Love



28 Nov

 **World Renew Cambodia**
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Today we pray for #SraeChrov. We pray for #GoodHealth & their community transformation #PrayMonday
#ChangingTheStory bit.ly/2eCD7Dk

“Oops” in Cambodia

by Carol Van Klompenburg
Participant on 20th-Anniversary Tour

We bounce over a progressively muddier Cambodian road on a trip for North Americans, hosted and planned by World Renew. The puddles widen and deepen. As we make a left turn, we enter Kandal Village in Takeo Province. A dump truck blocks the road ahead, mired up to its lugnuts in sienna mud. It grinds in first gear, unable to move forward. It tries reverse and slides toward a stick fence. Oh, no! I think. It is going to topple the fence.

Its backward movement stops. Oops, I'm wrong. After a few moments, the front of the truck bed rises, the back gate opens, and a flood of gray rocks pours out. It had to lighten its load. Now our path is blocked by a six-foot pile of sharp-edged rock. We can't go further.

Sovann, our Cambodian host and driver, parks our 1995 SUV and leads us—his three North American guests—around the pile on foot. Oops.

Villagers—men, women, and children—surround the pile. They smile, chat, load rocks in baskets, and carry them to the mud puddles. They have accepted this unplanned hardship, I think. And they are taking advantage of an unplanned windfall to improve their road. It will take them days to move the whole pile!

A half-mile down the road, we stop at a wooden house with a large aluminum overhang. A half-dozen people are seated on plastic chairs. The gathered group tells us about the Village Savings Group, which allows them to start micro-businesses like the silk spinning that is done at this house. At one side of the overhang is an Asian bed platform, topped with a bamboo mat and a spinning machine and a bicycle rim. The spinner demonstrates: she spins rough silk strands through her fingers, converting them into fine silk thread, which accumulates on a cardboard spool. She will sell these spools to help feed her family.

With our visit finished, we walk toward another home. Halfway there, I startle, as in the middle of tropical greenery a loudspeaker blares music. I look backward at the motorcycle that has just



Village women spinning (above) and weaving (below)



met us. The music must be coming from the cycle.

Sovann tells us the loud-speaker is in the tree. Oops. It is the village form of Internet, he says, asking for contributions for a collective need. “It may bother you, but for the villagers the loud music produces joy.”

In the second home a woman weaves silk fabric on a wooden loom, skillfully scooting a shuttle from one side of the fabric to the other to weave in each additional thread. There are many weavers in the village, she tells us.

Sovann talks with her a bit more in Khmer, the Cambodian language that sounds to me as if it is all vowels, although he has told us it has 28 consonants in addition to its 33 vowels.

As we retrace our steps, Sovann tells us that the rock that was dumped was ordered by the villagers and paid for with Savings Group funds. Every two years the villagers need to repair the road, since the Cambodian government does not. Oops.

As we turn a corner, I look ahead. The entire rock pile has already been moved into the puddles and low spots. The villagers, who completed the job in just a few hours, are chatting alongside the road. Oops.

We climb into the SUV, and I remember some advice in the materials World Renew provided us before this learning trip—a Chinese proverb:

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To know and not to act is not to know. But then, quoting C. S. Lewis, World Renew also cautioned us against leaping into action too fast. As the village disappears from sight in our rear window, I caution myself against another leap: leaping to conclusions.

Perhaps one form of being still and knowing that God is God is to be still and pay attention to other cultures. In that stillness might lie power, the power of surrender. Surrender to not knowing. Surrender to the God in whom I live and move and have my being, and surrender to the One in whom other cultures do the same.



Community members cheerfully work together to repair their road

Prayer Requests

- We give thanks for a successful 20th-anniversary tour. The eleven participants represented donors, volunteers, and churches that support World Renew Cambodia. Their visit, from November 3-14, was packed with every variety of experience from learning about the impact of the brutal Pol Pot regime, to experiencing the rich cultural heritage and food of Cambodia, learning about the work of World Renew in remote rural villages, enjoying spectacular sunsets at a serene resort in Kep, and touring the world famous Angkor Wat in Siem Reap. We give thanks for rich learning, deep emotional experiences, spiritual growth, and plenty of laughter along the way.
- We pray for our upcoming Christmas celebration. On December 16 World Renew and Christian Reformed World Missions will join together to host all our 22 staff and 14 partners for a half-day of worship and fellowship.



Multi-Stakeholder partnership meeting at Kampot

- We are thankful for the success of our Multi-stakeholder Partnership Workshop, which took place in Kampot from Nov. 24-25, 2016. This was the first offering of this workshop at the provincial level. Representatives from business, civil society, and government learned about the importance of partnership in improving governance and development. They left with concrete projects on which they will continue to collaborate in the next six months.
- We are grateful for the visit to Cambodia of Carol Bremer-Bennett and her husband, Theo. They were able to bring encouragement to our staff, partners, and community members in several remote communities where we work.



Carol with the ladies of the Srae Leav village savings group CWDC