

# Fall 2021 Update, Back to School?

Greetings friends. We hope everyone remains safe and healthy. Cambodia Corps continues to have an impact in Northeastern Cambodia even as the pandemic drags on. The Education Minister has had to close, open, close again and reopen schools as the virus dictates. Most schools have adapted with distance learning, staggered in-person days and reduced requirements. Many teachers have stepped up with internet assistance to individual students. Throughout this time our kids have had to remain at our Student Centers to have internet access, there being none in their villages. Our students have not seen their families in many months now. However, they are all making progress in their respective programs. All will have their programs extended by months, but they are all moving ahead, slowly but surely. During this time, we have had five girls graduate from college with another three about to finish in the next few months. Four graduates are in education. The first a Kindergarten teacher, assigned a class of 32, promptly organized staff and parents into a cleaning and sanitizing work bee for classrooms which expanded into a cleanup of building and grounds as well. The second teacher assigned 59 students, divided her kids into small groups, and with parent volunteers is going to their villages and conducting classes in open air settings. The third has been hired as a contract teacher for adult literacy, the fourth was hired by World Hope International which promotes early education and the fifth with Highlander Assistance a local NGO for the betterment of the Montagnard community. Five have graduated high school and are waiting for admission when colleges fully reopen



*Kindergarteners with homework*

On the darker side, there have been almost weekly news reports of Montagnard land grabs from individuals and developers taking advantage of the distraction of the virus. Across the border in VN, police in white lab coats have conducted midnight raids, arresting Christian Montagnard activists claiming they are being taken for Covid testing. After all this time, we are

still in a battle to help the Montagnard to protect themselves their lands and their culture from unscrupulous developers, corrupt gov't officials and communist reprisals.

But we have not been idle. Thanks to your loyalty and support we continue educating and motivating Montagnard youth to work on behalf of their community. Those who are teaching and in the health field are having a direct daily hands-on influence. So are our early graduates who are now working their way into other positions of influence on Commune boards or in District government. One is now head of the taxation department of Mondulkiri province. Some wear two hats. A Vet Tech is also now on the District Agriculture Planning Board. Their success is our success. Which would not have happened without your support. Sometimes when the struggle looks overwhelming, we must look to our kids and realize they have not given up on their pledge to help their people, they are proud of what they are accomplishing, and they are grateful we have given them the opportunity.

So even though the pandemic has slowed progress and others have taken advantage of the distraction, our students continue on, our graduates continue on and so we must continue on helping the Montagnard to help themselves. Your students thank you, as do Rich, Lewis, and me.

“Max” Lund, President Cambodia Corps

“More than half of the Montagnard adult male population was lost fighting with and for the Americans. Without their sacrifice, there would be many more names on that somber black granite wall in Washington DC, the Viet Nam Memorial.”

Mike Bengé, former POW and human rights activist.



*new teacher Sev Khean*