

Yawo of Malawi and Mozambique

The People Group

The majority of Yawo live in southeastern Malawi and northwestern Mozambique. They adopted Islam more than a hundred years ago after their interaction with Arab slave traders. Yawo people are highly aware of the spiritual realm and its impact on their daily lives. Most Yawo live in fear of the spiritual realm.

Social and religious homogeneity are extremely important in Yawo society which means becoming different, even in small ways, is significant. **This is one of the key barriers the Yawo face in accepting the truth of the Gospel, as it can be challenging for believers to maintain family and social links after deciding to follow Jesus.**

The Ministry in Malawi

Following years of relationship building and investing in culture and language learning, the team is journeying with growing faith communities of Yawo believers. **Local leaders are being raised up to lead these faith communities and believers are being baptised.**

These groups of Yawo believers and seekers face challenges in their communities, but are increasingly being recognised as established groups in their communities. **The team works to respond wholistically to people's needs through adult education and skills training.**

Prayer Needs

- » **Pray for Yawo believers to grow in their faith and discern what it looks like to follow Jesus in distinctively Yawo ways**
- » For the Yawo believers to seek opportunities to share the good news of Jesus within their communities
- » For vulnerable people to be protected from the health and economic impact of COVID

Team Members

Jean-Claude and Joyce
Heather and Jonno
Tim and Melanie
David and Susie
Shirley and Gary
Gunther and Sarah (candidates)

The Ministry in Mozambique

The team is journeying with individuals, families and groups in faith and life. Small but growing groups of Yawo men and women are meeting to explore God's stories. Some are at the beginning of their journey with Jesus and others have chosen to follow Him.

They are building authentic relationships, growing in their culture and language learning and seeking God's guidance, as they look for opportunities to share His love through word and deed.

Prayer Needs

- » Pray for intercultural workers to develop deep cultural understanding so they can communicate the message of Jesus in ways that make sense to their Yawo friends
- » **That seekers will connect with the team and begin to explore Jesus**
- » For emerging believers to grow in faith and understanding of Jesus

Team Members

Ben and Sam
Kath and Cam
Tobias and Heather
Sally
Scott and Rebekah

Stories of Hope

Word and Deed - Malawi

Jean-Claude and Joyce are passionate about sharing the message and hope of Jesus with their neighbours and Yawo friends. But this sharing takes place within the context of a wholistic response to their friends' needs.

The Yawo live with daily challenges of poverty, preventable diseases and limited education. Joyce is a tailor, and one way that she is responding to her friends' physical needs is through teaching them how to sew as an income generating initiative.

One woman that Joyce is teaching is Mama H. Jean-Claude writes that through learning to sew, Mama H has, "... a sense of hope and empowerment to repair, make and sell clothes. After seven months of sewing lessons from Joyce, Mama H is now a tailor and she is running her own business of making and selling clothes."

But this is just the start! Jean-Claude goes on to share that, **"Mama H became a believer in 2020, and Joyce and I baptised her in February. A few months later she began sharing her faith with her own people. God is good!"**

This is just one story of many.

Praise God for the way He is using Joyce and Jean-Claude to reach out and share His love through word and loving action. Give thanks for the partnership of Australian followers of Jesus that is enabling Jean-Claude and Joyce to be present in this community. **And pray for Mama H, and others, as they grow in their understanding of God's Word and share their faith in Jesus with their own community.**

More Stories from Malawi and Mozambique

- » **Episode 15 of Missioning** with Melanie: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Episode 11 of Missioning** with Scott: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

God Has a Plan - Mozambique

Cam shares how God is using an unlikely friendship.

"My friend Rachid spent his life farming and seeking God through his Muslim faith. He started noticing me as I rode my motorbike past his house and became curious. One day he stopped me and asked me who I was and why I was here in Mozambique.

This was the start of our friendship and soon we were meeting every week to share Bible stories and talk about life.

Through relationship, opportunities opened up to share who Jesus is and the freedom that comes with knowing Him. **After learning who Jesus is, Rachid decided that he wanted to follow the Jesus path.** He saw through God's Word that Jesus is the doorway to being in relationship with God.

Would Rachid have ever discovered Jesus if we didn't encounter each other in the Mozambican bush? I can't say for sure. Maybe God would have worked out another story. But what is apparent, is that God had a plan when He called us, an Australian family, to Mozambique. The plan involved Rachid hearing the stories of the Bible in a way and language he could understand.

This unlikely friendship between an Aussie and Yawo man resulted in Rachid being introduced to Jesus despite being part of a community where very few know Him.

The story of Yawo people encountering Jesus is only just beginning. **There is continuing need for Jesus followers to be here so that many more may discover what following Jesus means for them. Could God be prompting you?"**

K people of the Silk Road Area

The People Group

Being Muslim is key to the K people's identity. In everyday life, this means honouring guests, drinking tea and covering tables with meat, bread, salads, sweets and fruit. Life is directed by the seasons, more so than religious practices. There's the jam-making season, leaf-burning season, house renovating season, preparing for winter season and thawing out from winter season.

Generally, the K people live for today, believing it has enough worries of its own. This realisation means there's limited energy and money left to plan for tomorrow. K people value friendships but it's a challenge to take that deeper and discuss the need for a Saviour. Many haven't seen a living example of what it looks like to be a K person who follows Jesus.

The Ministry

Building on the foundation of former intercultural workers, the team is establishing themselves among the K community. They are building authentic relationships and living as good neighbours.

In the past year, they have been amazed to meet a K believer who is reaching out to groups of emerging K faith communities! They are so encouraged to know that there are local people here who are pursuing Jesus and seeking to get to know Him more. They are seeking God's guidance as they journey with these local believers.

Navigating ever-changing COVID restrictions has been difficult, but the team is continuing to engage with the community through the English Teaching Centre, as well as allied health and agricultural initiatives.

As an Occupational Therapist, Petra is using her skills to work with people who live with disability in the local community. These are people who are often rejected or ignored by their community. **By coming alongside them, showing them they have value, Petra is demonstrating the love of God.**

Team Members

Ben and Petra
Eliza (Team Leader) and David
Mel (candidate)
Suzanne (candidate)

Prayer Needs

- » Pray that there will be a strong movement of God's Spirit among K people
- » **For emerging K believers to be strengthened in their faith and understanding of who Jesus is and how to follow Him in their own distinctive ways**
- » For God to stir curiosity about who Jesus is and what the team believes among those connected with the intercultural team
- » **For intercultural workers to grow in their cultural understanding and language skills, enabling them to effectively communicate the Gospel in their context**
- » That the team's relationships with their K friends will continue to deepen and regular opportunities for spiritual conversations will arise
- » For wisdom and protection for the team as they navigate the cultural, relational and health challenges of COVID

Stories of Hope from the Silk Road Area

Emerging Communities

Eliza shares how God is breaking through in surprising and exciting ways.

“Anna, a K believer, met Lily through a mutual friend last year and invited her to join the newly formed ‘Sunday tea’ club - a gathering of K believers and seekers. Lily’s son Sam, who’s in his mid-20s, has brittle bone disease and life has been a struggle for many years.

So when Anna gave them a copy of the Bible in the K language, they spent time reading and engaging with the story. **When Anna followed up with the pair a couple of months later, she asked, “Have you read the book? Have you accepted Jesus?” The answer came, “Yes!” And Lily began attending Anna’s ‘Sunday tea’ club.**

“I’m very happy,” Anna says. “It had been eight months since our group started and some people came but didn’t really believe. Their hearts weren’t true. But women like Lily, they are real.”

Our faithful partners and supporting churches have joined with our family and team many times over the past 12 months to kneel in prayer for Anna and her family.

Together we prayed when her husband abused her, when she was desperately ill, when she started her ‘Sunday tea’ club, and together we praised God for the safe arrival of her sixth baby in January.

What a joy to be in this together, as we follow the Spirit’s leading to support the establishment of new K faith communities in this village and, hopefully, beyond.”

More Stories from the Silk Road Area

- » **Episode 27 of Missioning** with Mel: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Episode 10 of Missioning** with Ben: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

People of Peace

David and Eliza share, “We have developed a friendship with a tandoor bread maker called Kai and his wife May. Kai has asked David to build some furniture for a café he’s establishing. It’s been lovely to watch this couple work out what they need to do together; what sizes the kitchen benches should be; and how they can be careful with their money.

The four of us have stood in the café’s kitchen, working out together the best way forward. Kai gets stressed about how they’re going to get everything done in order to open in time but May is a very reassuring influence on him.

They invited us for a meal a couple of weeks ago and as we were leaving, May’s brother asked what religion we follow. We were able to share that we follow Jesus, who he’d heard of but didn’t know much about.

Then on Thursday, after Kai had poured out his heart to us in David’s workshop about the stresses he was managing, we offered to pray for him, right there and then. He really welcomed the petitioning and thanked us over and over again for our help.

Would you join us in lifting up Kai and May, our friendship with them and opportunities to tell stories about the One who saves?”

H people of Central Asia

The People Group

The H people are relational and hospitable, often centering important moments around food. They are known to be astute business people who love music and good conversation. The H people are a minority people group in a country where the government is continually tightening its regulations on minority groups.

Their history of religious discrimination has led the H people to be an insular community who hold tightly to their belief system. The vast majority of H people are Muslim and there are very few known followers of Jesus.

The Ministry

Pete and Nomes are currently the only team members on location. They are investing in their culture and language learning, which is equipping them for effective ministry among the H people.

God is opening doors for them to be involved in the community in formal and informal ways.

Particularly through Pete's local language nurturer, the family is being welcomed into H community life. They are being invited to join cultural festivals and smaller family gatherings.

Nomes and Pete are building meaningful relationships and asking God's Spirit to open opportunities for faith conversations in this challenging environment.

Former intercultural workers R and B are looking to return to serve among the H people as soon as possible, however are currently stuck in India due to COVID travel restrictions. They will return with years of ministry experience among this people group and a heart to build relationships and share Jesus.

Team Members

Pete and Nomes
R and B

Prayer Needs

- » Pray that God will be raising up more workers to join the team in sharing the Good News
- » For God's Spirit to be opening opportunities for relationship building and faith sharing conversations as the team connects with their H friends
- » **For God to miraculously open the door for R and B to return to Central Asia**
- » That the team will be growing their culture and language learning every day so they can build relationships and share the Good News in culturally understandable ways
- » **For God to be placing seekers in the path of believers who will journey with them towards Jesus**
- » That the team will be wise and bold as they seek opportunities to share faith within a challenging environment

Stories of Hope from Central Asia

Growing Authentic Relationships

Pete and Nomes share how God is enabling them to build deep, life-giving friendships.

“It is our heart’s desire that all people, and in particular our H friends, their families and the wider H community, would come to experience wonderful new life that is found in Jesus.

One of the things we are thankful for since returning to Central Asia last year, is just how warmly we have been received by the local people, especially by our H friends and Nomes’ work colleagues.

By God’s grace, we are slowly building deeper friendships and broadening our relational networks. We are so grateful that we are once again being invited to key social gatherings with Pete’s language nurturer Mike and his friendship group. One highlight was joining six families on a weekend away.

A few weeks later, Pete offered to shout all the guys to a meal out at a nice H restaurant. During this meal, the guys decided that this should be a monthly event and so Pete is now having regular opportunities to connect with this group.

But even more significantly, over this period Pete and Mike have had a number of significant conversations about matters of faith. In a recent culture and language lesson, Pete was able to give a basic explanation of the Easter story, explaining as best he could the grace and forgiveness that we can receive through Jesus and the fact that we seek to do good in loving response to the grace we’ve received, not in order to earn our way to heaven. This was something Mike had never heard before.”

More Stories from Central Asia

- » **Episode 5 of Missioning** with Pete: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

Explore God’s Word Together

Pete and Nomes write, “Throughout the course of the year, Pete has continued to meet with Mike for culture and language lessons and has regularly been connecting with other H friends over meals and at various other social gatherings.

During the summer, as part of his language lessons, Pete has been working through a number of stories from the Bible with Mike. First, Pete studies the stories on his own, and then he brings them to Mike and they chat through and record any new words that Pete has encountered through the text.

It has been fascinating to see the cultural insights that Mike brings in his understanding of the words being used and the meaning of the stories as a whole.

To this point they have focused on the early New Testament, allowing Mike for the first time to hear in-depth stories about someone whom he reveres as a ‘saint’ but, in reality, knows little about. **Please ask that as they continue to do this, Mike will be captivated by these stories, and that he would come to know this man, not just as a ‘saint’, but as his Saviour and King.”**

B People of South Asia

The People Group

The B people are one of the largest single ethnic and language groups in the world. They also live in one of the most densely populated areas on Earth. B people value family, honour and respect. Their Muslim faith is central to their identity and permeates their world view.

B people reject the perceived religious message of the west. This forms barriers to following Jesus as many see following Jesus as an alignment with the western world. Global Interaction's mission is to see vibrant communities to following Jesus in their own distinctive ways. For many B believers, meeting people from their own background who have come to faith in this way, has been integral to their faith journey.

The Ministry

The intercultural team is instrumental in the operation of a locally-led development organisation. Through this organisation, many local people are being empowered through education and upskilling, which is growing opportunities for meaningful employment and a better life. **Through our partner NGO's work, local project participants and local employees also have a safe place to freely explore and grow their faith in Jesus.**

Local believers and seekers are equipped with a translation of the Bible, written in language that is culturally understandable. The team is seeing believers engage with God's Word and grapple with what it means for their lives. Groups of believers are meeting together, growing in faith and supporting each other.

Team Members

Phil
Lisa*
Morris* (Team Leader)
Ryan (Team Leader) and Suzie*
Fiona* (candidate)
Graeme* (short-term visitor)
Graeme and Pat* (short-term visitors)

**Based in Australia*

Prayer Needs

- » Pray that God will raise up more long-term intercultural workers to disciple believers
- » For protection of believers and safe spaces for them to explore God's Word and encourage each other
- » **For the Holy Spirit to open opportunities for B believers to share the message of Jesus with people of peace**
- » That relationships built through our partner NGO's projects will lead to faith sharing conversations
- » For wisdom and protection for the staff of our partner NGO as they seek to respond to great physical need in the community that is increasing due to COVID

Stories of Hope from South Asia

God in the Midst

The COVID pandemic has hit the country of South Asia hard, with the poor being disproportionately impacted. Phil, a team member on the ground, shares, “It seems an improvement in the infection numbers will be heavily dependent on a restart of the lockdown. But lockdowns are having huge impacts on the poor, especially in urban and industrial areas. With no access to social security it’s a real challenge for many to purchase necessities. The Government is struggling to balance economic needs and public health.

In the midst of all these challenges, there are some positives. My teammate Morris has been running a weekly Bible study group with some local colleagues via Zoom. Each Sunday a group of staff connect in and explore God’s Word together. Another study is run for a group of women on a Tuesday led by another team member.

In the last couple of weeks, the leaders of the these groups have both noted increased enthusiasm and participation in the studies, which has been very encouraging. As you have probably experienced, studies and meetings via Zoom have a different dynamic to those face-to-face and so the success of these is encouraging. **This weekly contact has really only become part of the approach since the pandemic started. While in-person visits are the ideal, God is using this regular online contact and it’s exciting to see.”**

More Stories from South Asia

- » **Episode 22 of Missioning** with Lisa: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

Growing in God’s Word

At the beginning of each working day, staff of our partner NGO in South Asia sit together for a time of devotion. Many of the local staff are followers of Jesus. **Within the broader community, they must be careful with who they share their faith with for their own safety. However, with their colleagues at our partner NGO, they can share openly and encourage each other.** Together they read a passage from the Bible, have (sometimes) animated discussions about the passage and then pray. All believers amongst the staff have a chance to contribute.

Give thanks for the environment that allows them to do this and for the encouragement from leaders. Pray that even in these times of COVID regulations they would be able to continue these activities in some way. Pray that as they read, discuss and pray, they will come to a deeper understanding of Jesus and that they will grow closer to Him.

Pray that their desire to share their faith will increase and that they will have wisdom and discernment in how and when to say the right words.

Ethnic Thai of Thailand

The People Group

The Ethnic Thai people are hospitable, friendly and generally cheerful. They are also polite and respectful, avoiding conflict where possible. They are highly loyal to their nation, religion and monarchy. **Their identity is built on being Thai and Buddhist, which means it is difficult for them to see how they can follow Jesus in culturally relevant ways.** While Christianity is growing among Thailand's minority people, it is yet to significantly impact the ethnically Thai.

The Ministry

God is at work among the Ethnic Thai and He is drawing people to Himself. Over the past years, the team has built relationships within their community and walked with people as they have chosen to follow Him. **Praise God that numerous faith communities are now regularly meeting and local leaders are being equipped to teach and lead.**

As the team journey with the Ethnic Thai faith communities, they are witnessing the believers discerning what being a follower of Jesus looks like in their context. **The faith communities are questioning which elements of their culture can be adopted as part of their expression of faith, and which other elements should be modified or rejected in order to remain true to the Gospel.**

During COVID, Thailand has gone in and out of lockdown. **This has made it challenging for the team to fully engage with the community, however, God has opened doors for them to reach out and share His love.** The faith communities have been able to meet in person or online, though not all the believers have been able to join the online gatherings due to limited access to technology.

Team Members

Carolyn and Dema
Glenn and Liz
Luke and Belle
Muana (Team Leader) and Villy
Petina
Margaret (candidate)

Prayer Needs

- » Pray that the Ethnic Thai faith community leaders will be equipped more and more to lead their own people
- » **For the faith communities to be sensitive to the Spirit's leading as they discern their identity within the wider community**
- » For God to prepare the hearts of the Ethnic Thai people the team connects with
- » That God's Spirit will open opportunities for intercultural workers to have meaningful conversations and share the message of Jesus
- » **For Ethnic Thai believers to remain deeply connected to their communities, sharing about their faith in Jesus as opportunities arise**
- » That God will continue leading the team towards opportunities to engage meaningfully with their community throughout COVID
- » For God to raise up more intercultural workers to join the team

Stories of Hope from Thailand

God Encounters

Muana and Villy share a story of God breaking through, “Recently while on the train heading to meet with some of the Ethnic Thai faith community leaders, Villy received a message from a woman she did not recognise. As they chatted Villy was curiously trying to figure out who she was, as the woman seemed to know her well.

Later on Villy figured out who the woman was - U, a chef in a small Thai restaurant that we used to frequent during pre-COVID days. **A few days later she came to visit us. She shared about losing her job and struggling to make ends meet due to the impact of COVID on the economy.**

She had no one to turn to and remembered Li (Villy). “Li, where are you?” She looked for Villy on her phone and found her. Villy could not help her with her plans to invest in restarting the restaurant, however, she helped her with a plan to start a home delivery meal service with Villy and Muana being her first customers! She was then able to deliver meals three times a week to the different Bible study groups.

Villy explained to U that it was no coincidence she thought of her and shared the hope we have in Jesus. After they prayed with her, she asked, “What must I do to follow Jesus”? Villy and Muana encouraged her talk to Jesus and share her difficulties and struggles with Him, and also invited her to join a weekly Bible study group with them.”

More Stories from Thailand

- » **Episode 9 of Missioning** with Liz: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

Their Own Distinctive Ways

Dema and Carolyn share an example of how the Ethnic Thai believers follow Jesus in their own distinctive ways.

“Ethnic Thai people often worship guardian spirits for protection over their house and land. They also have rituals to ask for rain. Rice is a staple food here and many people depend on rice crops for their livelihood, including members of the faith communities. **While their neighbours ask guardian spirits for rain to help their rice crop thrive, the local believers pray to Jesus for good rain and a plentiful harvest.**

Before the rainy season starts, the believers come together to seek God’s blessing for the land. They bring tangible elements of seeds, tools, soil and water, scattering them and praying to the true provider of rain. **Through this, they are expressing their faith and trust in Jesus in a culturally meaningful way.”**

Khmer of Cambodia

The People Group

The Khmer hold a deeply Buddhist worldview that is strongly influenced by animistic beliefs. Faith and spirituality are highly valued, as are stories and relationships. It is a communal culture where honouring family and tradition is an important part of life.

Only around 2% of Khmer people identify as followers of Jesus. This means the majority of Khmer will not know someone who can share the good news of Jesus with them. For many Khmer, it is difficult to see how they can both honour their family and culture, and follow a 'foreign' God. Even acknowledging the existence of a God can be in conflict with the Khmer worldview.

The Khmer value doing good things to gain good outcomes. This makes it common for Khmer to struggle to understand why Jesus suffered a criminal's death on the cross. **But the greatest reason that Khmer people have been resistant to the Gospel, may be that the message has been presented in Western cultural packaging that doesn't make sense to them.**

The Ministry

The team is focussed on building authentic relationships, learning language and understanding the culture. **So that as God's Spirit opens opportunities, they can share the good news of Jesus in ways that makes sense to their Khmer friends.**

As they grow in their understanding of the daily disadvantages many in their community face, the team is establishing initiatives to wholistically respond.

These include teaching English to neighbouring families, working with fish farmers to improve outcomes, journeying with women through a sewing centre and empowering families through financial literacy education.

Team Members

Cathie and Andy
Catherine
Craig and Kim
Luke (Team Leader) and Rachel
Rob and Deb
Megan and Tristan
Rours and Reaksme (candidates)
KimLean (candidate)

Prayer Needs

- » **Pray that God will continue to move among the Khmer, drawing people to Himself and opening hearts to receive Jesus as the only way**
- » For the intercultural team to be continually growing in their culture and language learning and remain motivated despite the challenges of learning another language
- » **For intercultural workers to have opportunities to share God's stories with their Khmer friends**
- » That Khmer seekers will see examples of others following Jesus and remaining within their culture and community
- » For God to raise up more workers to join the harvest
- » For the Khmer people during COVID who previously relied on tourism for their income and are vulnerable to debilitating load debt

Stories of Hope from Cambodia

Moments to Movements

Andy and Cathie are team members of the Cambodian team.

One day Cathie wanted a coffee. And so she stopped at a store. It turned out this was Layk's store and it was good coffee! This moment started a relationship. Andy and Cathie became friends with Layk and his wife Thea.

Cathie and Andy started to meet them in everyday moments. Like Jesus did. They ate with Layk and Thea in their home. They spent time in Layk's coffee stall and Cathie spent time with Thea at her hair salon.

Hospitality is important in Cambodia and family is part of this. So it was exciting when Layk and Thea came to visit Andy and Cathie one night. Layk ended up bringing his brother-in-law's family as well.

God took one stop for coffee and used it to bring Andy and Cathie into contact with many people.

There are very few Khmer followers of Jesus. To find one you'd have to talk to over 300 people! So it was unlikely Layk would ever have met someone who would share the Gospel with him.

But as he spent time with Cathie and Andy he saw something different about them. And he asked them, "I know you follow Jesus. I want to learn more about that... I'm interested to see why you are here."

Layk doesn't know Jesus yet.

Please pray that Layk, Thea and their family will come to know Jesus. Pray with us that this is just the start of their story of faith and that a movement will flow out of these moments.

More Stories from Cambodia

- » **Episode 16 of Missioning** with Cathie: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Episode 7 of Missioning** with Deb: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

Thank You for Praying!

Luke and Rachel share of the power of prayer during their first years in Cambodia.

"During our first term in Cambodia, we were often encouraged and strengthened by the prayers that we knew so many were praying for us. Always, the next message of prayer, encouragement and support was never far away. And just as we knew many were praying for us, we also knew many were and still are praying for Cambodia, its people and our entire team.

Thank you.

Living interculturally brings a lot of excitement and joy - like when we have the opportunity to share something of Jesus with our Khmer friends and neighbours.

People like Sarah and her family who live just down the road from us, Simon, who Luke met at the Buddhist temple in town, and Mrs F who Rachel visits while walking 'Aussie' the dog. These relationships and others are bearing fruit, and we believe that God has good things in store.

Intercultural life brings its challenges and tough times too. And none greater these past few years than figuring out life amidst COVID. While our life in Cambodia was certainly disrupted, the disruptions and inconveniences we experienced in Cambodia have been small compared to the realities that many Khmer people have been facing. Prayer is so important at times such as these."

Thank you for partnering with our teams in prayer. Thank you for standing with them as they serve God and share His love in challenging places.

Indochina

The People Group

The people of Indochina are polytheistic and follow Buddhist and Confucian ideas while continuing ancestral worship and joining in with Western celebrations like Christmas. They are well-known for their hospitality and the country is growing economically and in tourist popularity. As a developing country with a huge population, challenges such as education, healthcare, poverty and human trafficking remain present.

The Ministry

There is currently a small team in serving in Indochina. Mark and Ngoc arrived at the start of 2020 and are Indochinese nationals. **They are excited to serve among their own people and are passionate about Indochinese people following Jesus in their own distinctive ways.**

They spent 2020 and most of 2021 in a northern city of the country, establishing themselves in the community, building relationships and teaching English to children and young adults. They also connected with a disadvantaged rural community and shared God's love through word and deed.

Global Interaction previously partnered with Hoa Stone, who ran an organisation in Indochina supporting people with disabilities. **With his passing in mid-2021, Ngoc and Mark made the decision to relocate to the city where the organisation is run in order to work through that ministry.**

Ngoc and Mark are currently preparing for the birth of their first child.

Team Members

Mark and Ngoc
Andy* (Team Leader)

**Based in Australia*

Prayer Needs

- » **Pray that God would be going before Mark and Ngoc as they seek to build relationships with people of peace**
- » That God would be opening the hearts of people in Indochina to receive the truth of the Gospel and follow Jesus in their own distinctive ways
- » For God's leading as Mark and Ngoc relocate and serve through the ministry empowering people with disabilities
- » **For doors to open for Mark and Ngoc to connect with their neighbours and engage in community life**
- » For God's Spirit to be powerfully at work, revealing who Jesus is and growing hearts to know Him

Stories of Hope from Indochina

Doing Life Together

Mark and Ngoc share about their ministry in the northern city. “We run an English Club with 15-20 university students every Monday night. We are completely in charge of recruiting students, lesson planning, paying rent and handling all the admin. After working through the initial kinks of the class details and learning how to support each other, we’ve turned into quite a team! Things run a lot smoother and we have lots of fun with this group of students.

During this time, we’ve also started doing dinner (and doing life) every Friday night at our place with a few locals, some of whom are from the English Club. It is a chance to tell them about God, what He has done for us and learn from them culturally. Of course, we’ve been letting it happen organically, so it will take some time. The group is made up of three young women, a 12 year old boy, and three young men.

Ngoc has started a knitting club with the young women. They all seem very interested in knitting – they get together at our apartment on Saturday afternoon for some cake and tea, some knitting and a lot of talking.

Mark meets the boys individually during the week for coffee, as well as English lessons. Mark and the other men in the group have been really enjoying spending time together. **Last Friday one of the men, Mr T, actually decided to put his trust in God. We all nearly fell off our chairs with excitement!** He now wants to read the Bible with Mark every Wednesday morning at their coffee meeting.”

Piglet Project

Through piglet loans, Ngoc and Mark are seeking to empower disadvantaged village families and share God’s love in practical ways. This project is now fully supported and they look forward to implementing it as soon as COVID travel restrictions allow them to begin.

They write, “We are so thankful for those who have generously and sacrificially given towards this cause. We plan to implement this project at the end of this year once we settle down in the South.

The idea of this project is to give two female black piglets per family in the village (at a cost of \$100.00 AUD per pig) so that they can start their own herd of pigs. This particular black pig is a good investment as they are easy to raise, will eat just about anything and multiply quickly.

They are in high demand for their lean meat. After a cycle of four months, the female pigs will be able to reproduce their own piglets, two of which will be given to another family in the village.

We can see that this project will be able to make an impact and assist those villagers to raise some extra income, especially during those colder months in the mountains. It will also be a tool for reaching out and building meaningful relationships to the surrounding villages.

We have found a very trustworthy leader here who will be closely monitoring the project on our behalf. We plan to visit the village bi-monthly to encourage and share with the villagers to make sure the project is managed properly and effectively.”

South East Asia

The People Groups

The Global Interaction team serves among a variety of people groups in South East Asia, predominantly the B.I and S.I people. The B.I people are scattered across a number of small islands. They liken themselves to pineapples, prickly on the outside but sweet on the inside. As a highly communal culture they observe strict societal boundaries around behaviour and religious practices. These boundaries work to maintain honour and avoid shame.

Around 45 million S.I people live in one of the most densely populated regions on earth. S.I people value maintaining their distinct identity and traditional cultural practices. The vast majority of S.I people are Muslim with animistic influences. Most see following Jesus as a betrayal of their people and culture. The S.I people who are choosing to place their faith in Jesus have come to understand that following Jesus is not about forsaking their cultural identity, but about entering the Kingdom of God.

The Ministry

The team has established various projects in South East Asia that are making an impact and expanding avenues for relationships to grow.

The Education Foundation continues to offer opportunities for local people to learn new skills, improve their education and grow their employment opportunities. Likewise, the Café and Creation Care initiatives are providing platforms for local people to connect with wholistic activities that respond to their physical, environmental and spiritual needs.

COVID has significantly impacted the country of South East Asia and the team's ministry. Through their already established platforms, the team has begun humanitarian initiatives of providing much needed food to families and PPE to health workers. This is building trust and relationships within the community.

The team is witnessing more and more people open to exploring Jesus and responding to His message. New believers are discerning how to live out their faith within their communities in new ways.

Team Members

Dave (Team Leader) and Caz
Daz and Bee
Pat and Joy
Max and Ezzie
Ando
Mike
Ally (candidate)
Kate (candidate)
Simon and Widya (candidates)

Prayer Needs

- » That the intercultural team will continue to build meaningful relationships in which Jesus can be shared
- » **For believers to be strengthened, encouraging each other and growing in their understanding of God's Word together**
- » That believers will remain in their communities without experiencing opposition
- » For God's Spirit to stir in the hearts in people's hearts a desire to meet Jesus
- » **For seekers to be emboldened to explore Jesus, not only as a prophet but as the Messiah**
- » For God's protection over the team and vulnerable people during COVID

Stories of Hope from South East Asia

One Person After Another

Phillip grew up in a very poor family in South East Asia. He didn't have opportunities for much education. But God in His kindness reached out to Phillip, and Phillip came to know and put his trust in Jesus. He entered into God's Kingdom.

Since that time, Phillip has had a desire to share the good news of Jesus with others. He works with our team in our community development initiatives, particularly working with local scavenger communities. These communities are about the lowest rung on the social ladder in South East Asia.

Phillip lives a very simple lifestyle with his wife. They live in a tiny little house. **But Phillip is constantly engaged in sharing good news of Jesus with those that he comes into contact with.** One person after another hears the good news and comes into the Kingdom because of Phillip's sharing.

Those people in turn will then share with their spouse and children. And in this way the Kingdom is starting to spread from household to household.

Phillip gathers some of the people that have become leaders in this small movement from different parts of our city. Together with some of our other local workers, he disciples these people, and teaches them how to establish small house churches in their homes from which they can in turn share with other people.

Will you continue to pray for our team as they seek to minister in partnership with people like Philip and others? Please pray that the Kingdom of God will continue to grow in this part of the world.

More Stories from South East Asia

- » **Episode 17 of Missioning** with Dave: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

The Start of Movement

Team Leader Dave shares incredible stories of God moving in the lives one, then two, then countless more!

“Alice came to faith and was the first employee of the Education Foundation. She later brought two of her friends from university to interview and subsequently work there too. Over time, both of those women came to know Jesus, were baptised and are influencing others to come to faith. They both now hold leadership roles in the Education Foundation.

All three of these women grew up in Muslim families and all three were the first believers in their extended families and villages. They are now passing on the Good News to others in their communities.

Bernie is the head of our Creation Care work. He is meeting weekly with six men from Muslim backgrounds who are now followers of Jesus. These men are from different parts of the city here and Bernie is training them in outreach and establishing new home groups. There have been ten people who have come to faith over the past few months through this ministry and there are several more families eager to hear the good news of Jesus.

These kinds of stories have been repeated over and over here among the local staff in the past few months. Praise God for the movement of His Spirit and pray for more people here to find freedom in Jesus.”

Outback Australia

The People Group

Indigenous Australians represent 3% of our country's population. There are a large number of tribal and language groups, therefore a wide variety of diversity exists within their cultural practices. People in these remote communities continue to face challenges relating to health, education and employment.

Global Interaction serves alongside the Gurindji and Warlpiri people in communities across the Northern Territory, offering training and Bible teaching to encourage church leaders to lead their congregations as they follow Jesus in their own distinctive ways. Our team supports the Christian community as they listen to the Holy Spirit and discern how to live as disciples of Jesus in a world that straddles Indigenous and Western cultures.

The Ministry

Since 1946, Global Interaction has had a presence among the Gurindji and Warlpiri people in Outback Australia. The team is committed to walking alongside people, sharing faith, discipling believers and empowering leaders.

Respect, time and the demonstration of genuine care are the foundation for authentic relationships where faith and life can be shared.

The team spends time meeting with local people, chatting over a coffee and investing in everyday moments of friendship.

Team member Shannon writes, "We are witnesses to God's faithfulness to His people in Outback Australia. He continues calling us to reach out with the light of the Gospel. **We are building relationships and learning all we can about life here. Pray for wisdom, strength and growth for the church and our little team.** Thank you for praying and giving to partner with this work."

Team Members

Mat and Shannon
Vivian* (Team Leader)
Beth and Danny* (candidates)

**Based in NSW or Victoria*

Prayer Needs

- » **For local faith community leaders to be strengthened and equipped to lead their own people**
- » That the believers will demonstrate Jesus' love within their communities through their actions and words
- » For the intercultural team to disciple and journey with believers well
- » **That local believers will reach out to their communities, investing in authentic relationships and sharing the message of Jesus**
- » For meaningful steps of reconciliation, dialogue and healing across this country
- » For more workers to join the ministry of humbly journeying alongside First Nations believers and leaders

Stories of Hope from Outback Australia

Telling Important Stories

Our vision is to see vibrant faith communities following Jesus in their own distinctive ways. But what does this actually look like? Shannon and Mat give us an insight into what this means for the First Nations believers they are journeying with.

“One of the ways we are witnessing people following Jesus in their own distinctive ways is through the retelling of Bible stories. Over Easter, the church community told the story of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection through a corroboree or purlapa.

This was made up of dancing, music and traditional songs. This year, the children acted out the story. It was special to see them participate in the retelling of the story in a way that will help them understand it.

This presentation of the Easter story was very understandable and comfortable for a Warlpiri person. The song lines were very Warlpiri, the rhythms were very Warlpiri, and the dancing and body paint was very Warlpiri.

This is how they tell important stories. And so it was beautiful to see them tell this most important story in this culturally significant way.”

More Stories from Outback Australia

- » **Episode 18 of Missioning** with Shannon: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Missioning
- » **Short news articles:** www.globalinteraction.org.au/News

The First Step

Mat and Shannon write, “April and Easter are by far the busiest time of our year. The Yapa (person or aboriginal persons) churches have been meeting together to celebrate Easter for many years. The communities take it in turns to host the others and this year the gathering was here at Yuendumu.

This means taking a lot of time thinking about how the church wants to celebrate and what they may need, but this year we were given an insight we hadn’t had before. At one meeting Mat was frustrated that preparations weren’t happening quickly enough. At the next meeting, he saw people making up with one another and ensuring everyone felt ok. There were some apologies and forgiveness. Some encouragements and lots of conversations.

As Mat sat in the circle, he suddenly realised that preparations were in fact being done! In this relational context, people were doing the work of making sure relationships were ready for the work that needed to be done, and the tasks that lay ahead. This was the first step. Relationships are more important than tasks.

It was an important observation and a good lesson for us to look a bit closer when it feels like nothing is being done.