

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.