

Announcing health internships from “SiRCHESI” NGO in Siem Reap, Cambodia.
An intensive, 17-day researcher/practitioner “full-immersion” course for small groups of 2-4.



Citoyen(ne)s de Siem Reap pour la Santé, de l'Éducation et les Questions Sociales

Cambodian Registered NGO # 704

Next intakes:

3 places still OPEN: Feb 14—Mar 3, 2015 (17-day)

RESERVED: May 14- June 2, 2015 (20-day)

4 places OPEN: Aug. 17- Sept 2, 2015 (17-day).

SiRCHESI and the Community Health Challenges in Siem Reap

SiRCHESI (**Siem Reap Citizens for Health, Educational and Social Issues**) is a non-profit, non-religious, non-political, non-governmental organization (**NGO**) formed in Cambodia in 2000. Its history and latest newsletters can be found at www.angkorwatngo.com. For the past decade and a half, SiRCHESI has provided the Siem Reap community with research-driven health programs, first supported by research grants, now from selling Cambodian fair trade items, corporate and private donations, and paid student internships (17 or 20 days).

Because Siem Reap is located next to the Angkor Wat temples, the tourism centre of Cambodia, the influx of visitors has introduced new infections such as HIV/AIDS, adding to the endemic tropical illnesses (malaria, tuberculosis, Dengue fever, encephalitis, dysentery, etc). As tourism numbers increase--currently 3 million--- the combination of sexual tourists, local men's non-monogamous behaviour, and poverty-driven sex work all contributed to the rise in rates for HIV/AIDS and STIs. By 2000, for example, Siem Reap Province's HIV/AIDS prevalence rates were among the highest in the country, while Cambodia had the highest rates in South-East Asia-- 42% of brothel-based sex-workers HIV+ and 20% of beer-sellers.

At the start of the new Millenium, SiRCHESI, as a small, local, community-based NGO, first began confronting HIV/AIDS, in tune with many of the Millennium Development Goals. SiRCHESI has used a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, defining its activities with input from various community stakeholders including concerned citizens, business people, persons from high risk groups, and community health and medical workers. At the same time, government, international agencies, and other NGOs all ramped up their research and intervention programs against HIV/AIDS, under the co-ordination of the Provincial AIDS Office, whose Director, Dr.Sarath Kros, MD, MSc, also served as part time Program Director for SiRCHESI (2003-12); he now directs the Provincial Health Department.

Today, after 15 years of research-guided interventions in the community and correlated lower prevalence rates, SiRCHESI's staff can share their effective health delivery and research skills and knowledge. The internship program was designed so that staff can mentor, one-on-one, students and researchers interested in seeing, up close and personal, the creation, workings and monitoring of health programs/systems in a resource-challenged, developing country.

SiRCHESI's INTENSIVE INTERNSHIPS

In a short, intense 17-day period (20 days for U. Alberta medical students), up to 4 students at a time will participate in a series of modules involving hands-on field research, health interventions, hospital visits, interviews with health administrators/policy makers, observation of/participation in rural village outreach health programs, and visits to other relevant NGO programs. Much of SiRCHESI's research/intervention expertise is in the area of reproductive health, the community response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, STIs, mid-wifery, alcohol abuse, workplace violence and prevention of trafficking of women and children. As well, additional work is carried on by our public health and NGO colleagues confronting malaria, TB, Dengue Fever, etc. Visits to other NGOs involving Poverty Reduction, HAART distribution, tuberculosis rural outreach, child protection, and gender equity and human rights advocacy, as well as to trade unions, may also be arranged.

In 2015, Mr Pen Sary, the Director --an HIV Educator since 1997-- welcomes you with 5 staff members and 23 outreach, peer-educators. International Advisors are academics working with the local staff who supervise interns and the research program. Prof. Ian Lubek will supervise the 2015 internships. Over the past 15 years, SiRCHESI and its public health colleagues have provided valuable educational experiences in Siem Reap to 39 student interns from 7 countries-- with 6 coming back for a second time. Originally, they imparted skills (including SPSS) to the SiRCHESI local staff, training them in systematic health research, statistics, promotion and dissemination skills. Beginning in 2012, SiRCHESI launched the formal internship program, and the staff have "given back"-- passing on their health skills and knowledge to new interns from public health, medicine, psychology, global development, etc. In addition, numerous multi-authored conference presentations and research papers, as well as 6 theses, have evolved from these collaborations (see <http://www.fairtradebeer.com>). SiRCHESI has, from the outset, helped build local capacity in Siem Reap, working alongside colleagues from the Provincial AIDS Office, Provincial Health Department and other agencies. SiRCHESI also has linked itself to international resources, inviting researchers /practitioner experts to confront locally-defined community health challenges -- initially, HIV/AIDS prevention, women's illiteracy, poverty, and gender inequity, to which were added, as the project progressed, the prevention of alcohol abuse, workplace violence, and child trafficking and sexual predation.

Current SiRCHESI Health Promotion programs:

SiRCHESI uses a multi-sectorial, multi-disciplinary approach to community health-promotion, through Participatory Action Research (PAR). This has involved:

- i) annual behavioural interviewing and VCCT monitoring of 4 risk groups (2001-12);
- ii) active local and rural health outreach by peer educators (reaching more than 12,000 contacts in 2013);
- iii) health workshops for several hundred beer-sellers and young souvenir vendors annually;
- iv) workplace health and safety monitoring with interviews and breathalyzer testing ;

v) an NGO Annual Meeting where research and intervention priorities are set for the coming year by a gathering of SiRCHESI staff and stakeholders.

In addition,

vi) as part of a “primary” prevention, in 2006, SiRCHESI founded a school to facilitate long-term, financially secure career paths for 26 women in the safer, healthier workplaces of large hotels. SiRCHESI continues to monitor their career, social and family progress into 2015;

vii) SiRCHESI has strengthened local health promotion infra-structure through its “**hybrid model of capacity building**”. Elizabeth Kirkwood (2009) evaluated SiRCHESI’s health promotion work <http://fairtradebeer.com/reportfiles/KirkwoodThesis.pdf>.

HEALTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM and CURRICULUM.

The internship curriculum includes meetings with local health providers to learn and observe how the multi-tier (public, non-profit private, and for-profit private) health system operates, lectures and powerpoint presentations in English, and research-intervention activities and field trips. SiRCHESI welcomes multi-disciplinary students to interchange skills and ideas! Up to four persons share our interpreter/driver (and his car), helping to interact with local Khmer speaking stakeholders.

Activities include: Supervised research data collection experiences (based on ongoing projects already possessing Research Ethics Board clearance), workplace interviews and breathalyzer testing, health workshop presentations (with pre-post questionnaires), following peer-educators to rural villages and participating in reproductive HIV/AIDS education, participating in anti-trafficking workshops and interviews with young children interacting with tourists, meetings and interviews with hospital workers to learn about the daily issues of organizing health delivery in an impoverished environment, attending a workshop for beer-sellers’, meeting union officials urging better health and safety for workers, visiting local hospitals, clinics and NGOs. We recommend each student brings a laptop with wifi, extra USB drives, an up-to-date antivirus program, WORD, EXCEL and SPSS installed. A FAQ sheet will be provided, based on previous internships..

Curriculum topics (may vary slightly from cohort to cohort)-- extra items may be added according to interns’ backgrounds/specialties:

Costs: The 2015 17-day course fee is US\$2500; the 20-day fee is \$2800, which includes comfortable air-conditioned, shared hotel accommodations with pool, cable TV, free internet/SKYPE, and buffet breakfast. One additional meal per day is covered by the program, which can be taken at the hotel, in a “beer restaurant”, or at a tourist restaurant nearby. Each room has a small “mini-bar fridge” with extra space for snacks and beverages, an all-night store is behind the hotel, the Angkor Market, one block away, has ‘comfort foods from home’, and an upscale “Lucky Mall” is across the road. Some evenings, the staff will accompany you on a working dinner --e.g., beer-restaurant data-collection, Apsara dancer show. Interns have at their disposition a shared translator/driver, and a very full series of scheduled presentations, field trips, data collection, and supervised field research activities with the local NGO staff of SiRCHESI and international advisors. Since Participatory Action Research requires an “immersion” by researchers into the community, the first three days are designed to explore the community of Siem Reap/Angkor Wat and gain an understanding of the tourists who come here; all Temple and Tonle Sap Lake admission fees are included. Sophiap, our driver/translator/guide accompanies the 4 students in his car; 1 staff member or international advisor supervises each module. The hotel dining room and many nearby tourist restaurants provide “safe” meals at \$5- \$9.00, with vegetables washed in purified water, etc. Students eating ‘tempting local foods” from street vendors may get sick during

their stay, so we recommend exercising caution with food choices, and always drinking and brushing teeth with bottled water (supplied by the hotel or available in grocery store across the road). Vegetarian food selection is available, but often “fish sauce” is used in the cooking. Vegans will find peanut butter and french fries, but persons on highly restricted diets may find some compromises needed to culturally adapt to local and tourist cuisine.

Visit your Travel Medicine Clinic to determine what shots you should renew; we suggest shots against Hepatitis A and B. Malarone is an effective anti-malarial prevention treatment during the visit; older treatments (e.g., Doxycycline) may no longer be effective against Cambodian strains and may have side effects. Cambodia has high rates of TB, malaria, HIV/AIDS and STIs, Dengue Fever, encephalitis, etc. and reasonable precautions should be taken, e.g., long sleeves and pants in evenings, mosquito repellent--especially the variety purchased locally.

Air fare to Siem Reap and Insurance are not included. There are daily or multiple flights from Bangkok (Bangkok Airways; Angkor Airways), Singapore (Silkair, Air Asia), Vietnam, Seoul (Asiana, Korean) and Shanghai and other Chinese cities, etc. Buses from Bangkok can take 8 hours. Buses from Phnom Penh (with additional airline service– Thai, Malaysian, EVA, Dragonair) can take 6-8 hours. All international researchers work pro-bono. Neither SiRCHESI nor any international university “sponsors” this program, although their staff/ researchers may be supervising on the ground. All students should make sure that their own university or private trip insurer provides insurance/risk coverage for off-campus, university-related work or touring in Cambodia.

TO APPLY: Please Contact SiRCHESI International Advisor **Prof. Ian Lubek**
<ilubek@uoguelph.ca>

Four places are available each intake. A \$250, non-refundable deposit, sent to SiRCHESI's account in Cambodia, guarantees your spot (first-come, first serve).



1) Interns Michelle and Joel (Canada) and Claire (UK) with SiRCHESI staff, interviewing & breathalyzer testing



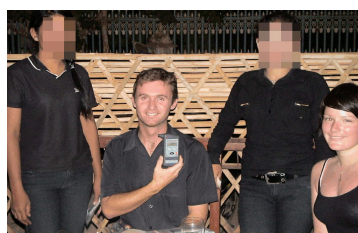
2) Beer sellers promote one brand



3) Many still drink with clients



4) Brett (Australia) and Trisha (Canada) work with young vendors at Angkor Wat



5) Breathalyzer testing of beersellers



6) Trisha prepares health workshop condom kits



7) Joel, Michelle (Canada) Claire (UK), Yulia and Darren (Canada) enter data during workshop



8) Michelle and Pam (Canada) at Angkor Wat



9) Michelle, Pam and peer educators in village health promotion outreach



10) Pauline (USA) assists Dr Mee Lian Wong (Singapore) with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome clinic



11) Teacher Neela (Australia) gives English Lessons to some of 26 former beer-sellers trained by SiRCHESI



12) Graduation ceremony for Hotel careers



13) Dr Sarath Kros leads vendor workshop(2012)



14) Dr Sarath, SiRCHESI staff (2004)



15) Translator Sophiap, Natalie (Australia) and Gabe (Canada) during follow-up interviews with Hotel students



16. Beer-sellers' Workshop questionnaires.



17. Kate purchases fair-trade bracelets, with translator Sophiap



18. Ian and Kristy meet pediatrician Dr. Beat Richner, founder of 5 private Khanta Bhopa hospitals



19. Vanessa (rt. rear), 3 HAP students, 2 children+staff



20. Breathalyzing in Restaurant, Oct., 2012.



21. 2013 interns from U. Guelph, U. Hannover



22. U. Alberta Interns 2013



23) Hui Shan Tan, Feb. 2014 National U. Singapore, with Khanta Bhopa doctors



24) Kateri (USA), U. Alberta Students, and Dr. Richner, June 2014



25) Collette, Adele, UK, with peer educators Aug. 2014