

Annual Report 2014

1. Overview and Project Description

The Foundation of Children's Hospitals Kantha Bopha, Dr. med. Beat Richner, in Zurich (hereinafter "foundation") has opened five children's hospitals named as Kantha Bopha in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap Angkor (hereinafter the "Kantha Bopha hospitals") in Cambodia under the direction of Dr. Beat Richner since 1992.

The Kantha Bopha hospitals take care of about 85% of all the sick children in Cambodia. 80% of the seriously ill and hospitalized children would not have a chance of survival without these hospitals.

The treatment is free of charge for all the children. 80% of the Cambodians are without any means and 80% of our patients come from families with a daily income of 1 USD or less. It is simply impossible for them to pay!

The Kantha Bopha hospitals have the highest correlation worldwide between costs and healing rate. This is why they can also serve as a model for the poor countries. In addition, as expressed in figures, they ethically support justifiable family planning resulting in mothers knowing that when their child is seriously ill, they can take them to the Kantha Bopha hospitals for free. Mothers in Cambodia no longer have to give birth to more than ten children for fear of losing every second child. Our maternity loses only one mother for 16,000 births. As a result, mothers giving birth in our maternity, approximately 60 births per day (with expecting mothers coming from all regions of Cambodia), now seldom have more than 3 children nowadays.

Kantha Bopha is an unparalleled success story around the world in the health care sector. The Kantha Bopha hospitals have treated 13.5 million ill children since 1992 and whereby 1.56 million seriously ill children have been hospitalized and fully cured.

The Kantha Bopha hospitals are an exemplary model for a functioning health care system in one of the poorest countries in the world. Kantha Bopha is free of corruption and enjoys a reputation as a refuge for justice and social freedom in Cambodia.

1.1. 23 years Kantha Bopha

The importance of the Kantha Bopha hospitals can only be explained and understood within the historical context of Cambodia.

King Norodom Sihanouk, who died in October 2012, had the Children's hospital Kantha Bopha in Phnom Penh built in 1962. The hospital was named in honour of his daughter Kantha Bopha, who died of leukaemia at infancy.

Up to and until the outbreak of the Vietnam War (1965-1971) and the subsequent Khmer Rouge's reign of terror (1975-1979), Cambodia operated a well-developed health care system. The entire infrastructure in Cambodia was completely destroyed by the war and the subsequent civil war and an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians – about a quarter of the country's population – were murdered.

During the final negotiations of the Paris Peace Agreement in Paris in September 1991 the well-known Zurich paediatrician Dr. Beat Richner was asked to redevelop Kantha Bopha, a place where he had worked in 1974/75 until the invasion of the Khmer Rouge in Phnom Penh. The newly restored Kantha Bopha was inaugurated early on 22 September 1992 with the participation of King Norodom Sihanouk and Ysushi Akashi (Japan), Chairman of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The hospital has become a successful project. The hospital was soon overburdened. On a daily basis the hospital faced more than 20 gravely ill children who could only be treated in the over-loaded intensive care unit, and as a result were rejected care. At that time, all our employees were staff of the Ministry of Health. Due to the mass increase of patient volumes, more doctors had to be requested. The Ministry was limited in being able to supply adequately trained personnel for our needs. As a solution, Dr. Beat Richner began hiring young Cambodian doctors, who completed their internship at Kantha Bopha and who demonstrated great intelligence and motivation. Today these Cambodian doctors all hold senior management positions.

In September 1995 King Norodom Sihanouk confirmed that all medical personnel should be selected by the foundation and had to adhere to a set of specific criteria. Furthermore, he personally allotted a plot of land at the royal palace. On 12 October 1996 Kantha Bopha II was inaugurated at this site by King Norodom Sihanouk and the president of the Confederation at the time, J.P. Delamuraz.

In May 1999 King Norodom Sihanouk inaugurated the third hospital in the presence of the Prime Minister Hun Sen: Jayavarman VII (Kantha Bopha III) in Siem Reap Angkor.

Since then the hospital has been expanded five times and now has an X-ray department, a laboratory, a hospital pharmacy, operating theatres and four wards. The maternity hospital was opened on 9 October 2001.

Kantha Bopha IV (Phnom Penh) was inaugurated in December 2005 and started to operate in January 2006.

In December 2007 Kantha Bopha V in Phnom Penh was inaugurated, after a construction period of only 12 months. It offers a ward comprising 300 beds, a vaccination clinic, a laboratory and an X-ray department.

The hospitals in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh have state-of-the-art equipment offering both MRI and CT scanners.

1.2. Health Care Services

The figures for 2014

The primary task of the Kantha Bopha hospitals is to treat thousands of severely ill children suffering from infectious diseases (tuberculosis, dengue fever, encephalitis, meningitis, etc.).

Even though fewer children with severe cases of haemorrhagic dengue fever had to be hospitalized in 2014 as compared to 2013, the number of hospitalizations has increased slightly.

We observe a constant increase of hospitalizations since 1992. The continuous increase was only disrupted by particular peaks in years of pronounced epidemics of haemorrhagic dengue fever (e.g. 2007, when 18,000 children with severe dengue fever had to be hospitalized, and 2012 with 22,000 hospitalizations of children with severe dengue fever).

The continuous increase of patient volume can be explained by the improvement of transport infrastructure and the continuing poor health care system in the country. The patients come from all of the 24 provinces. As a result, our hospitals have hospitalized 85% of severely sick children in Cambodia. With respect to dengue fever the number has amounted to 92% of the severe cases.

These evolving and unique numbers – every day a total number of 3,000 to 3,500 patients and pregnant women come to our hospitals - are evidence of the instilled trust of the population in Kantha Bopha. These resultant numbers are also reflective of the fact that it was our hospitals that twice discovered the outbreak of a cholera epidemic and three times the outbreak of an avian flu epidemic.

The increase in the number of patients is also related to the factor that the poor population is becoming poorer. Those people can simply not afford the costs in the public and the private health sector. 80% of the Cambodians are poor farmers. As is generally known, any treatments at Kantha Bopha are free of charge. There is a further factor that does not prevent rich Cambodians to take their children to Kantha Bopha or to have their children born at Jayavarman VII, in large part due to the significantly inadequate quality and hygiene in the public and private health sector. Large family donations continue to rise as a result and Kantha Bopha remains a bona fide solution for the hospitalization or birth of one of their children.

In 2014 alone, the number of severely ill children who needed to be hospitalized amounted to 122,086. These severely ill children, that would normally have no chance of survival without hospitalization, are fully cured following their release from the hospital. Incidentally, we have yet to see a recurrence of the infection of tuberculosis (endemic in Cambodia) or dengue fever in the last 23 years.

2,479 hospitalized children suffered from encephalitis (inflammation of the brain); all of those severe cases were confirmed by the MRI scanner (one MRI scanner in Siem Reap and one in Phnom Penh). 60% of these cases are caused by the Japanese encephalitis (JEV). We carry out vaccinations to combat this dreadful disease and endemic in Cambodia. 249,490 vaccinations have been administered.

The number of outpatient treatments of sick children amounted to 696'329. Before being admitted to the polyclinic a triage is completed by the doctors. The children who were not seriously ill and were therefore released following triage have therefore not been accounted for in our data.

In the year 2014, 18,335 (2013: 16,749) surgical operations were performed. Furthermore, there were 121,017 outpatient pregnancy check-ups and 19,361 births at the maternity hospital Jayavarman VII (Kantha Bopha III). The mortality rate at the Kantha Bopha hospitals was only 0.3% in 2014. Please find further details in the attached table "Global Admission" (appendix 1).

Heart surgery and invasive cardiac catheterizations

As reported previously, the illnesses with the highest mortality rate in our hospitals are the consequences of congenital heart defects.

In March 2011 Prof. Oliver Kretschmar introduced invasive cardiac catheterizations. Our team is now capable to perform them on its own.

The first heart surgery was carried out in November 2011. In 2014 our Cambodian team independently performed one cardiac surgery every day.

In 2014 the cardiac team, under the direction of Prof. Luca Vricella of the John Hopkins University, Baltimore USA, attended the facilities twice for a week. Furthermore, Gerard Babatasi from France attended the facilities three times this year. He attended without the team from "Chaîne de l'espoir" who attended 22 times during the prior three years. Prof. René Prêtre, Lausanne attended once and lastly Prof. Oliver Kretschmar from Zurich was there for the cardiac catheter surgery. All four professors were completely surprised and delighted that such a model health care unit has been established that can now operate in such an independent manner.

This is made possible because all the hospitals' infrastructure function at very high levels: the laboratories, the blood bank, the intensive care units, and the diagnostic facilities (an additional CT scanner with 128 slices per minute was installed in November 2014, which also amplifies the efficiency of heart diagnostics). Notably, the around-the-clock discipline of the employees has been outstanding and practically and intellectually rewarding. Conversely, this is not the case in Cambodia outside of Kantha Bopha.

The third FMH course for doctors of our Jayavarman VII, Siem Reap hospital

In cooperation with the Children's Hospital Zurich, we have completed the third course. Over the course of the last three years, several colleagues from the Children's Hospital Zurich came to Cambodia each for a week to teach their sub-specialty resulting in the respective Cambodian colleagues obtaining the equivalent levels of a paediatrician FMH qualification as in Switzerland. The final evaluation of the course took place in November. Attending were Prof. F. Sennhauser, director of the Children's Hospital Zurich, Dr. Peter Studer, paediatrician and Vice-president of our foundation, the principal of the medical faculty in Phnom Penh, the head physician of Jayavarman VII, and Prof. Yay Chantana. All were the members of the jury. Notably, all the candidates successfully passed the exams.

The Kantha Bopha hospitals have the status of Cambodian University and government hospitals

The Head of Kantha Bopha Phnom Penh, Prof. Ky Santy, Head of Imaging Departments, the Head of Kantha Bopha (Jayavarman VII), Siem Reap, Prof. Yay Chantana, both woman surgeons in Siem Reap, Prof. Keo Sokha and Prof. Or Ouch, one of the two Heads of the maternity hospital, Prof. Tiw Say, the two Head surgeons in Phnom Penh, Prof. Pa Ponnareth and Prof. Chour Serey

Cheddana, are regular professors at the Medical Faculty, Phnom Penh. Furthermore, 22 other colleagues are lecturers.

A minimum of 160 students work as interns in our hospitals in the departments of paediatrics, surgery and obstetrics. The nursing college, which is affiliated with the Medical Faculty Phnom Penh, sends an annual attendance of 200 interns to the Kantha Bopha hospitals. Additionally, assistant medical technicians are trained in the laboratory and radiography.

Since 1994 (when only Kantha Bopha I existed), Kantha Bopha has been a department of the Health Ministry. Kantha Bopha III (Jayavarman VII) in Siem Reap, which was inaugurated on 22 May 1999, was an annex of Kantha Bopha, Phnom Penh. At the request of Dr. Beat Richner, the Prime Minister Hun Sen signed a sub-decree in November 2014 which states that Kantha Bopha III (Jayavarman VII) in Siem Reap Angkor is its own department of the Health Ministry. Resultantly Prof. Yay Chantana is now Head of a department at the Ministry and in a higher position at the Ministry than the Health Director of the province Siem Reap. Kantha Bopha III (Jayavarman VII) is now the only structure in this province of Cambodia and reports directly to the Ministry, which is of great importance for the long-term continuation of Kantha Bopha in its predefined structure. Kantha Bopha delivers decent salaries for its 2,500 Cambodian employees in a manner free of corruption and further ensures its policy of free treatment for everyone.

Official Visits

The new Head of the Asian and Southern Asian department of the SDC, Ms Franziska Freiburghaus, visited Jayavarman VII Siem Reap Angkor. She was very impressed with the organization and the number of patients and noticed the commitment of the Cambodian employees at work around her. She was taken aback by what she saw. According to her own words she had seen many hospitals in the developing world, but never anything like this. What she experienced was beyond her imagination.

She visited Kantha Bopha IV in Phnom Penh on 15 November 2014. She had the same impressions following her visit to Kantha Bopha IV.

The daughter of the Prime Minister Hun Sen, Hun Mana, President of the Bayon Foundation, visited Jayavraman VII in Siem Reap Angkor. She was so inspired by what she had seen that she presented a cheque for over USD 1 million as a donation from the Bayon Foundation.

Official Visits outside the Hospital

In May, the President of the Cambodian Red Cross, wife of the Prime Minister Hun Sen, Samdech Bun Rany, invited us to the headquarters of the Red Cross. There we were presented with a cheque of USD 1 million.

At the end of May, an audience took place with the king Norodom Sihamoni at the royal palace. Dr. Beat Richner delivered him the booklet "The wonderful Kingdom of Princess Kantha Bopha".

In June 2014, we were invited to an audience by the Queen mother Norodom Monineath, wife of the two-years deceased king Norodom Sihanouk.

Buildings

Two or three years ago, we anticipated that the number of births in our maternity hospital would decrease following the establishment of a Korean maternity hospital within the province hospital Siem Reap. But this was not the case due to several factors. Conversely, the number of births has continually risen. This added awareness is drawing more mothers from further away to these services. As a consequence, the maternity facilities and the departments are so chronically overcrowded that mothers are undignifyingly forced to lie on mattresses on the floor. To alleviate this injustice, we started to build an expansion of the maternity hospital in October 2014 encompassed in a new building comprising three floors, eight birth facilities, an operation theatre, 80 beds and two lifts.

During the inauguration of Kantha Bopha V in Phnom Penh in November 2007 the Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed the spontaneous idea to open a museum in an old and spacious house that was built in the French colonial style in Kantha Bopha I. This home had once served as a maternity hospital during the colonial era and is the birthplace of the assisting king Sihamoni. The house was in a dilapidated state and the wooden structures had been destroyed by termites. The home has not been used since the inauguration of Kantha Bopha IV in December 2005. Prior to 2005, two intensive care units and the neonatology department had been located there.

In October 2014 we commenced the renovation of the building encompassing a ground floor that will accommodate the archives of medical records and the first floor will house and showcase the museum.

Both buildings should be operational at the end of October 2015.

1.3. Health Care Professionals

At the end of 2014, the foundation employed a total of about 2,500 local employees in the five hospitals in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap Angkor. In addition to Dr. Beat Richner, Head of the Kantha Bopha hospitals, the only other foreign employee working for the foundation in Cambodia is Dr. Denis Laurent (Head of Laboratory and dual citizen of both France and Cambodia).

The Kantha Bopha hospitals operate sustainably and with the very high quality collaboration with the Cambodian employees. The medical education and training of the younger colleagues are enhanced and maintained in a sustainable way. All the head doctors are aged between 41 and 48 and eagerly train their younger colleagues in a most professional and colloquial manner.

2. Foundation Board and Management

During the two meetings of 27 January 2014 and 13 May 2014 the foundation board focussed on the statutory business. The present member lawyer Dr. Christian Steinmann retired from the foundation board, based on his retirement and departure from Switzerland. In autumn 2014 our member and treasurer Arthur Müller passed away unexpectedly. His functional role has been assumed by his deputy Tiziano Tuena. The continuity of this important function is therefore ensured. Tiziano Tuena was elected a member of the foundation board in January 2015.

The Compensatory and Audit Committee met on 5 May 2014 and was presided over by Dr. iur. Florian von Meiss. The body reviewed the compensation of the managing staff as well as the expenditures relating to bookkeeping, donations and public relations matters.

The Foundation Board wishes to thank Intercontrol AG for its transparent and precise bookkeeping and the monthly reports on current financial status. We are also very grateful for the competent care of the business in connection with legacies, bequests and all the correspondence with donors.

In 2014 PricewaterhouseCoopers AG (pwc) controlled the annual results as our appointed auditors.

3. Financial Concerns – Donations – Public Relations

3.1. Annual Financial Statement

The Annual Financial Statement for 2014, approved by the Foundation Board on 8 May 2015, closed with assets of CHF 40'142'380.79 and a surplus of CHF 6'456'526.38.

The organisation capital (equity) therefore increased by CHF 6.4 million to CHF 39.2 million. The owned equity resources are very limited and only provide for a finance period of an estimated 12 months period for hospital operation.

As in previous years, the Annual Financial Statement was carried out according to the recommendations of standard SWISS GAAP FER 21. The audit report by pwc of 8 May 2015 contains no limitations or details and recommends that the Foundation Board approve the Annual Financial Statement.

Our accounting contains two matters of particular concern:

- Due to the unstable political situation, the lack of legal security and for general administrative caution, the investments are debited directly from the expenditures.
- Under Cambodian law, the purchase of real estate by a Swiss Foundation is not permitted, three plots of land are held in trust by Dr. Denis Laurent, member of hospital management and French-Cambodian dual national. There is written evidence of the corresponding trust relationship.

After a surplus of expenditures of CHF 6.2 million the previous year, the revenue surplus in 2014 amounts to CHF 6.4 million. The improvement in the results is mainly due to the following factors:

- The donations rose to CHF 41.4 million (second best result in 22 years, previous year 2012: CHF 39.4 million). The legacies remained at the same level as in the previous year, at CHF 8.4 million. The large donations (donations of more than CHF 100,000) increased by CHF 3.5 million to CHF 8.4 million.

- The expenditures for the operation of the hospitals in Cambodia (“project expenditure Cambodia”) have increased by CHF 2.6 million. This increase is particularly due to higher personnel costs (CHF 1.1 million), higher costs for medication (CHF 0.3 million) and investments in medical equipment and building extensions (CHF 0.9 million).
- We are pleased that “infrastructure expenses Switzerland” have further decreased by about CHF 400,000.00, particularly due to fewer fund raising campaigns.

The part of our administrative costs (referred to as “infrastructure expenses Switzerland” in the income statement) confirmed by pwc is in keeping with the average of the past three years at 6.95% of the total revenues, which is an efficiently low ratio and representatively reflects a lean organisational process.

The administrative costs mainly comprise public relations, including advertisements, IT, administration of donations, thank-you letters, bookkeeping and auditing costs.

3.2. Public Relations

In addition to his role as Head of the five hospitals, Dr. Beat Richner shows tireless dedication to generate donations. He informs on the current activities of the hospitals in the regular advertisements (see also appendix 2).

In 2014 we carried out a total of three mailings (including flyers for the 20 franc note campaign) in March, June and November. Based on the more than 95,000 personalised addresses, we generated responses from CHF 7 million resulting in an estimated 42,000 donations.

Dr. Beat Richner continued his weekly information sessions in Siem Reap, accompanied by his cello concerts. Every Saturday evening, Dr. Beat Richner informs an international audience in the auditorium of the Siem Reap hospitals about current medical, political and financial aspects of his activities.

In order to inform donors and to generate donations, Dr. Beat Richner travels to Switzerland twice or three times a year. In 2014 he gave two concerts in the Grossmünster in Zurich and a concert each in the Klosterkirche in St. Gallen, in the Klosterkirche Einsiedeln as well as in the Berner Münster.

In May 2014 the 23rd gala of the circus KNIE took place in Zurich. This is also when Dr. Beat Richner sold and signed the freshly published booklet: "The wonderful Kingdom of Princess Kantha Bopha" for the first time. The success was huge; similar to the success in Phnom Penh, were we hand the booklet over with a translation into Khmer.

In November 2014 the chief editor of the magazine Schweizer Illustrierte (SI) and the photographer Monika Flückiger came to visit us. We are pleased to enclose the offprint of the article of December 2014 by the SI to the annual report (appendix 3).

4. Thanks

The foundation is grateful for the nearly 100,000 donors and the many companies and foundations for their financial and ideological support of the Kantha Bopha hospitals during the year 2014. Your help in 2014 enabled us to provide medical help to an estimated 122,000 seriously ill children and to garner outpatient treatment to almost 700,000 sick children in Cambodia.

We would like to address our thanks to the governments of Cambodia and the Swiss Federation for their regular support and we hope for a further increase in their participation.

The contributions of the Cambodian government have been increased from USD 2 million to USD 3 million by the Prime Minister Hun Sen since 2012. These proceeds were paid directly to our foundation thus averting payments to the Cambodian Ministry of Health. The Cambodian Red Cross, presided by Hun Rany, the Prime Minister's wife, donated USD 1 million. The foundation Bayon, presided by the Prime Minister's daughter Hun Mana also donated a further USD 1 million.

The yearly contributions of the Swiss federation have been increased from CHF 3 million to CHF 4 million for the years 2013 through to 2015.

We thank Circus Knie for their continued hospitality and generosity for over 20 years by continuing the traditional Knie Gala where friends of the foundation can meet in a pleasant atmosphere and enjoy the exciting programme.

Furthermore, we thank the media for their interest, support and their continued coverage of Dr. Beat Richner and his aid agency. Special thanks go to the Schweizer Illustrierten magazine for their many years of loyalty and favourable editorial.

Warmest thanks to our donors. You know:

Every franc helps to heal, save and prevent

Zurich, 8 May 2015

For the foundation board:



Dr. iur. René Schwarzenbach
President

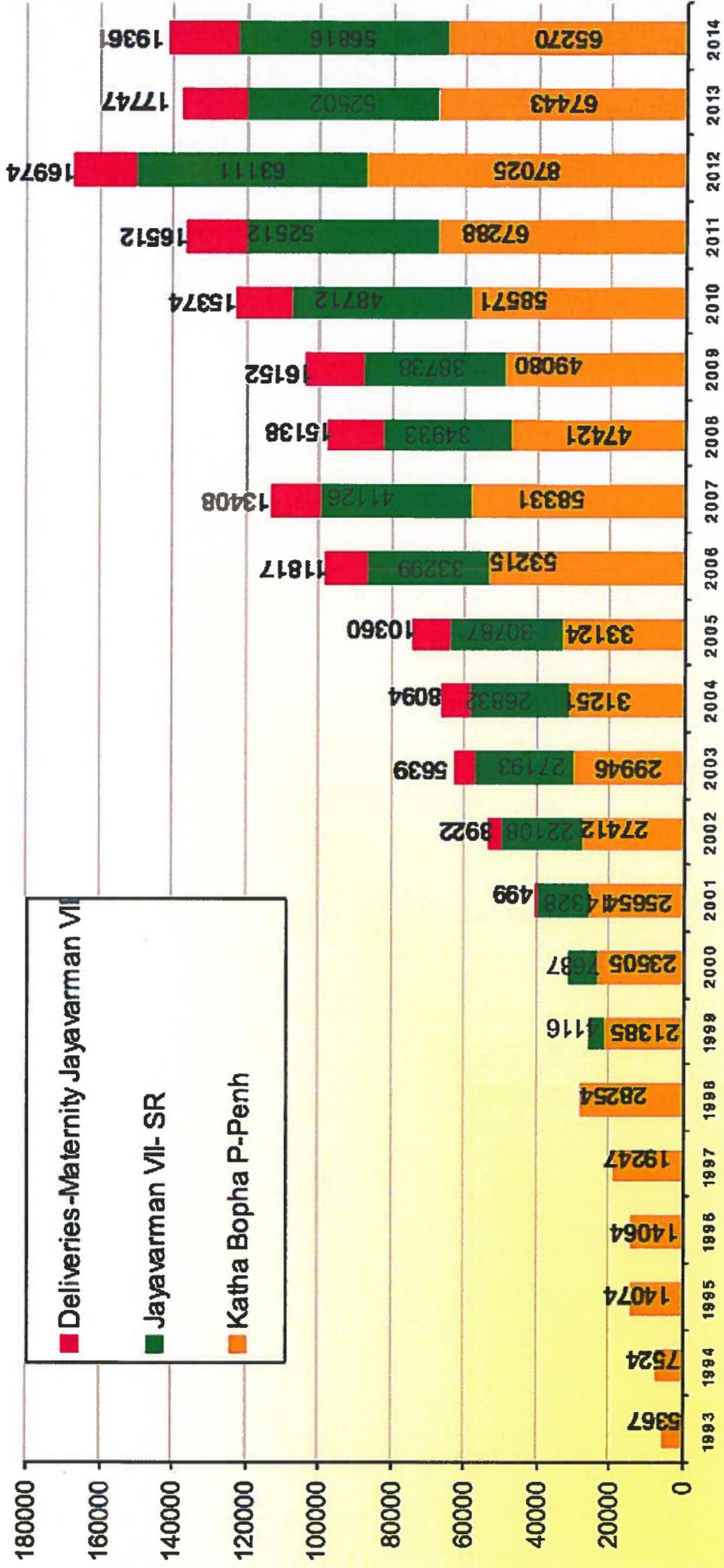


Dr. med. Alfred Löhner
Honorary President and member of the
foundation board

Enclosures:

- Table "Global Admission"
- Advertisement of 24 April 2015
- SI offprint

Global Admission





Fourty years ago, the Khmer Rouge took power

a sustainable circumstance that explains the disastrous health condition of Cambodian children. Without or with purpose, this is underestimated or misinterpreted by the government and the International Community.

On April 17, 1975 the Khmer Rouge invaded Phnom Penh. Lon Nol's troupes had been supported by the U.S.A. until the fall of Da Nang (Vietnam). But then, they disappeared and peacefully resigned prior to the fall. Thousands of them were executed.

During their cruel reign of terror, the Khmer Rouge assassinated over one million people and let hundreds of thousands perish from hunger and disease. **It is being called genocide.**

Three hundred concentration camps, labor camps and prisons have been installed throughout the country. These became breeding places of tuberculosis. Already in 1974/75, as I was working as a doctor with Red Cross at Kantha Bopha of Phnom Penh, numerous children suffered from obvious tuberculosis: white pus («caseum») did leak through thoracic fistulae. Kantha Bopha then had only 80 beds. **Tuberculosis would expand like bushfire in those imposed horrible installations.**

Actually, an average of 60 deliveries occur every day in our maternity at Siem Reap Angkor. This last week, there was an average of 68 deliveries. Therefore we are in the process of expanding with 8 additional delivery rooms, 80 beds and intensive care.

T-cells specific of tuberculosis are demonstrated in 34 percent of child bearing mothers. And pulmonary calcifications («primary complex») caused by tuberculosis are shown by CT in 60 percent of these mothers. They are infected by tuberculosis, yet (still) not affected by active disease. At term the pregnant woman undergoes a natural immune suppression in order to prevent rejection and loss of the fetus. This process of immune suppression is induced artificially in recipients of a heart transplant or kidney transplant, so that the foreign organ may not be rejected.

Through the mechanism of natural immune suppression in the pregnant woman, her «primary complex» may get destabilized toward the end of pregnancy: the tuberculous germ enters the blood stream and may invade the fetus as well. **Tuberculosis, sustainable heritage of the Khmer Rouge's terror reign, is moving from mother to child. BCG vaccination against tuberculosis, still propagated in poor countries by WHO, is useless (as known in the U.S.A. since 1944!). In contrary: we could show that newborns vaccinated by BCG do undergo a more severe affection by tuberculosis than non-vaccinated children. BCG vaccination is like fuel into fire.**

In 2014 we treated 21'000 cases of obvious tuberculosis. Even in children who are infected by tuberculosis yet prior to the outbreak of active disease, the resistance is reduced because their immune potential is weakened by their primary infection under the stressed defense against the disease. **Therefore, newborns and children in Cambodia are more likely to get sick with other diseases than children of the neighboring countries Vietnam, Laos or Thailand.**

We are able to treat them sustainably. We never observed reinfection in a child who had tuberculosis and had been treated correctly. The mortality rate in our hospitals is only 0.3 percent, and we treat 85-92 percent of Cambodia's severely diseased children.

This can only be done thanks to your help; 82.5 percent of our financial burden is carried by private sponsors, a majority from Switzerland.

Each CHF is supporting cure, rescue, and prevention. We thank you from our heart.

**Dr. Beat Richner, Founder and Head
of Kantha Bopha since 1992, PC 80-60699-1**
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www.beat-richner.ch
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**SCHWEIZER
ILLUSTRIERTE**

Reprint of an article in
Schweizer Illustrierte
magazine, December 2014

DR. BEAT RICHNER

A never-ending quest for donations

KANTHA BOPHA CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS For many years, Dr. Beat «Beatocello» Richner has been treating sick children in Cambodia, free of charge. An entire generation owes him a debt of life.

Words alone cannot describe what **DR. BEAT RICHNER** has achieved over the past 23 years in Cambodia. But the paediatrician is worried – and homesick. A conversation about Kantha Bopha, why he is embittered, and why he feels a lot better when the weather in Switzerland is miserable.

INTERVIEW **STEFAN REGEZ**
PHOTOS **MONIKA FLÜCKIGER**

Mr Richner, let's talk about your life and your lifetime achievement – the Kantha Bopha Children's Hospitals in Cambodia. Essentially, of course, Kantha Bopha IS your life.

True, but it isn't the life I aspired to. In 1991 in Paris, after the war had ended, the King of Cambodia spontaneously asked me to rebuild Kantha Bopha. And I said yes! I thought my chances of success were extremely slim, even on the day of my departure.

But you did succeed.

Yes, thanks to the people of Switzerland. Since our launch in 1992, their generosity has never failed to astonish me and has given me hope for the future. Kantha Bopha should really be funded by the state, but the Cambodian government's current contribution is only three million Swiss francs, and we get four million francs from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. That's far too little! So we need donations to cover the lion's share of our 40 million Swiss franc budget.

Perhaps you shouldn't attack those from whom you want money!

I have to. They only pay up if pressure is applied. The Cambodian government would lose face if it failed to support Kantha Bopha. This is evident on Facebook, where we already have 160 000 fans. If Kantha Bopha was a political party, we would win the elections.

What does that mean to you?

Nothing, absolutely nothing! My life revolves around the hospital, the restaurant and my house. I keep my distance, out of a sense of respect, but also as a form of self-protection. In the final analysis, the Cambodians have to settle these things themselves. **Like at the hospital, where you always maintain a distance from the children.**

Definitely! I don't like to be photographed with children in my arms. A child belongs with its mother, and not with the doctor. That would be a cheap trick, that would be arrogant. Helping is arrogant!

Did you never want to do anything else?

Of course I did! Cambodia is not where I want to be, this is not the life I wanted for myself. It is sheer hard work, the pressure is huge. And I cannot return to Switzerland with a clear conscience until long-term funding has been secured.

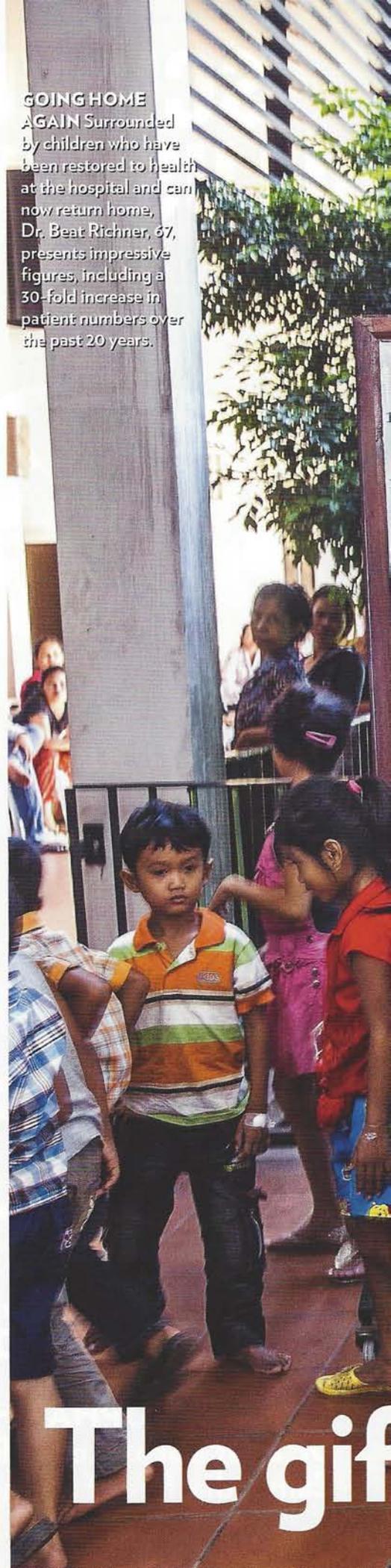
Kantha Bopha now has 2550 employees. In 2014, 122 000 children were treated as inpatients, more than one million as outpatients and 19 000 births were recorded. You do appreciate what you have created, don't you?

Quite probably not. My life revolves around the here and the now, the day-to-day workings of the hospital, the medical issues, the ongoing development of the organisation.

You are the hospital director, chief physician ...

... and the «lodge warden» who hires the staff. There are moments when I am physically here but do absolutely nothing. Sometimes it's better to do nothing ▶

GOING HOME AGAIN Surrounded by children who have been restored to health at the hospital and can now return home, Dr. Beat Richner, 67, presents impressive figures, including a 30-fold increase in patient numbers over the past 20 years.



The gif



Global Admission



t of life, in numbers



“Whether in Switzerland or Cambodia – every life has equal value”

DR. BEAT RICHNER



TO BE GOOD, MEDICAL CARE MUST BE SUSTAINABLE

Top: Making the rounds of the Kantha Bopha IV wards in Phnom Penh: Beat Richner studies a CT scan showing a serious case of pneumonia. «I like my job as a paediatrician, and diagnostics is one of my favourite fields.»

Top right: Prof. Santi, Chief Physician in Phnom Penh, prepares San, 8, for an MRI.

Bottom right: In the medical library in Siem Reap (l. to r.): Richner, Prof. Felix Sennhauser (Children's Hospital Zurich), Chief Physician Chantana Yay, Dr. Peter Studer, Vonthanak Saphom (University of Phnom Penh).

► than to do too much. You simply have to be present. And then an infuriating situation crops up, due to the corruption in Cambodia, or caused by the international organisations.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has accused you of practising «luxury medicine».

The WHO's attitude is a mixture of arrogance, ignorance and incompetence! They want to gear medical care to the economic realities of the country. That, in my opinion, is disgraceful. Whether in Switzerland or Cambodia – every life has equal value. For example tuberculosis, the biggest problem in Cambodia, can only be diagnosed in children by means of a CT scan. In Kantha Bopha we are able to immediately detect any occurrence of cholera or bird flu – thanks to the good medical infrastructure we have. And the same applies in the context of the Ebola epidemic in Africa.

What do you mean?

If you want to successfully treat Ebola pa-

tients, a good, clean and corruption-free hospital infrastructure is the vital prerequisite. But for the WHO, the most important measure is to tell people in the Third World countries to wash their hands regularly. With all due respect – you can wash your hands non-stop 24 hours a day but it won't do any good at all when you're dealing with Ebola or dengue fever!

Kantha Bopha provides free treatment for all. Why?

Because there is no alternative. Eighty per cent of the families in Cambodia are poor, they live on one dollar a day. They can't pay for medical care. Mothers bring their children to Kantha Bopha because they trust us. Corruption is a problem in other hospitals where they charge the patients for treatment. The fact that the WHO refuses to acknowledge this issue is a bitter pill for me to swallow.

You seem to be slightly embittered...

That is correct, I am not happy. My quality of life here... Every Alpine farmer in Switzerland enjoys a higher quality of life, even

if he doesn't receive any government subsidies (laughs). But at least I have my cello. I play 30 to 40 minutes a day – the sessions keep me fit for my Saturday concerts in Siem Reap. Playing the cello makes me feel better.

What does a day in the life of Beat Richner look like?

I get up at 5, go to my office and check my mail. Then I have a look at what's going on in the world. Whether Federer and Wawrinka won. If possible, I watch Federer live on TV. I only watch recordings of Wawrinka's matches because I'm always afraid he'll lose. So I'm really delighted for him that he played such a key role in Switzerland's Davis Cup triumph. And I always check the weather in Switzerland.

Why?

I often feel unhappy, I'm often homesick. Then I think how good they have it in Switzerland. But when the weather is bad there, I feel a little bit better (laughs). At 6:15 I have breakfast in the canteen, always two fried eggs, and at 6:50 we have our ►

Every day life at Kantha Bopha 12 of 120 000 cases each year



10 hours old Little Sveinitch was born in the maternity ward of Kantha Bopha – one of 18 000 births.



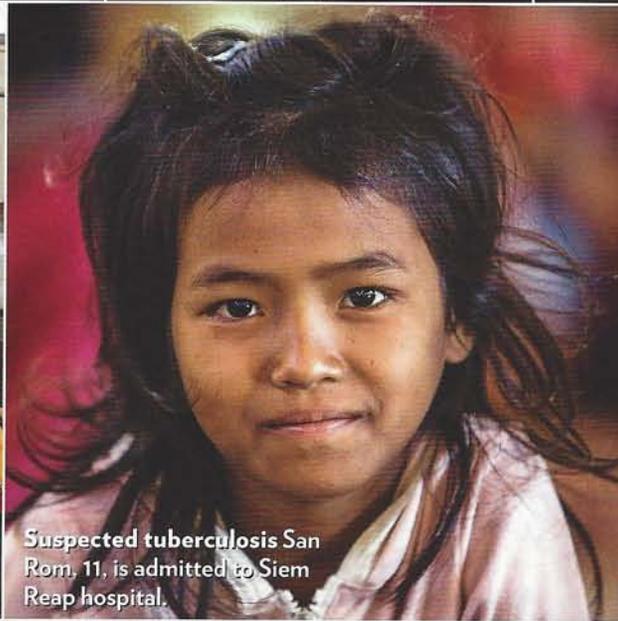
Immunisation Thy Sreyhot, 3, is one of the hundreds of children who are vaccinated every day at Kantha Bopha.



Snakebite Panha Chorn, 1, was attacked at home by a venomous green pit viper. He's getting better now.



«**Kantha Bopha syndrome**» Three-month-old **So Hai Phors** was born with tuberculosis.



Suspected tuberculosis San Rom, 11, is admitted to Siem Reap hospital.



Asthma Seiha, 2, at Siem Reap Children's Hospital – 100 kilometres from home.



Second-degree burns Chantrea Sok, 8, having fun with paper and pencil again.



Pneumonia Two-month-old Dau Yuth being breastfed by her mother.



Dengue fever Poev Soeun, 5, admitted with haemorrhagic shock, has survived.



Heart surgery 1 Freshly operated nine-month-old **Lida Pham** with her mother.



Heart surgery 2 **Thary Hun, 13**, with her mother, had a congenital heart defect.



Craniocerebral injury Chan Khang, 14, was hit by a rock and got seriously hurt.



HOMESICK Beat Richner loves to smoke a cigarillo on the veranda of his house in Siem Reap. «I gaze at the sky, watch the clouds and imagine I am in the Alps.»

“When I’m having a smoke, I can close my eyes and it feels like being back home in Zurich”

DR. BEAT RICHNER

► big meeting with all the doctors and staff. Then I do the rounds in the wards and see to all the administrative matters. Four days I’m at the hospital in Siem Reap, three days in Phnom Penh.

Don’t you have any leisure time, or take a holiday?

When I’m in Switzerland, I have my public appearances and collect donations. I’d rather not spend too much time there. Every additional day in Switzerland makes it more difficult for me to fly back to Cambodia.

You are 67. How long will you be staying here?

Well, until I manage to secure funding for the next 15 years. I don’t know when that will happen.

What will your life as a senior citizen in Zurich be like?

I’ll be a pensioner in Zurich with a railway travelcard.

You’ll be bored!

Hmm, I doubt it. A few years ago, an older colleague warned me that I might fall into a dark hole when I stop working. I told him I’d been in that hole since 1992. Things can only get better (*laughs*).

Did you ever want a family? Children of your own?

Yes, I did, but then I went to Cambodia. I’d never have done that with a family.

Were you ever married?

Yes, very briefly, a long time ago. It lasted three months. But don’t print that! At the

time it set a record for the shortest marriage in the canton of Zurich (*laughs*). But I found out that my record has been broken since then.

Did you always want to be a paediatrician?

Yes! Although I did focus on music for a year after passing my Matura exams.

Are you in good health?

Hmm...what should I say...not so long ago I was thinking that it’s a miracle that I’ve never been really ill in this hot and humid climate. Ten days later I came down with a serious bout of fever and had to cancel my concerts in Switzerland.

Do doctors diagnose themselves?

Yes, they do, but sometimes they get it wrong. That’s why I flew to Switzerland and consulted my GP.

You smoke cigarillos. Not exactly what the doctor would recommend.

But it’s so relaxing!

Do you drink?

Yes, the occasional glass of wine in the evening. It’s good for the coronary vessels. But I don’t have any wine at home. It can be a bit risky when you’re alone, it’s so easy to empty the bottle. And I never go out. You could say I lead a life in solitary confinement, lifelong solitary confinement. Worse than Pope Francis in the Vatican (*laughs*).

Do you do any sport?

No, never! Sport is dangerous!

And you never go for a swim?

No, that’s why I’ve never drowned.

Are you proud of Kantha Bopha?

No, because the funding question remains unresolved. I’m convinced, of course, that we are doing the right thing. And when we do the rounds, I’m doing what I love to do, I’m a paediatrician through and through. But Kantha Bopha is not my dream come true. I think you can only be truly proud of something you really wanted to achieve in life.

That means you wouldn’t take on Kantha Bopha again.

If I had known in 1991 what I was letting myself in for, then yes, I would have refused. I would be leading a comfortable life in Switzerland, with a successful paediatric practice and my Beatocello performances. That was what I really wanted, nothing else. I didn’t run away, nor did I leave because I wanted to do good things in Cambodia.

Where would Dr. Beat Richner be today if he had stayed in Switzerland?

I’d have bought that nice little house in Krönleinstrasse in Zurich and would be enjoying life. I have never been back since my former landlord sold the house in 2000. I haven’t been able to muster the courage. But I do smoke the same cigarillos on my veranda in Siem Reap as I did back then. And when I smoke, I can shut my eyes and travel back to those times. And then I feel like I’m back home in Zurich. ●

Right: Dr. Beat Richner enjoys the daily rounds of the hospital wards. «When we do the rounds, I'm a paediatrician through and through.»

Below: Richner (r.) with Stefan Regez in one of his hospitals in Phnom Penh.



Editorial



Stefan Regez, Editor-in-Chief, Schweizer Illustrierte

Nobel Prize worthy!

Kantha Bopha Everything is clean, organised, calm and quiet. Without the doctors and nursing staff in their white coats, you would never think you were in a hospital. Visiting Dr. Beat Richner's Kantha Bopha Children's Hospitals in Cambodia is an impressive experience. The 2550 employees know exactly what they have to do. More than 2000 children are being treated here, but you don't hear much crying at all. This can be attributed to the fact that no child is alone in the hospital, to the comforting presence of their mothers or fathers. And they all trust the professional – and free – care they get at Kantha Bopha.

It's all about money

Every year, some 120 000 Cambodian children are admitted as inpatients to the Children's Hospitals in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, one million are treated as outpatients and 18 000 births are registered. The annual budget totals 40 million Swiss francs, of which not even

20 per cent is covered by the Cambodian government and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. This means that Dr. Beat Richner has to somehow fund the shortfall through private donations, and with his performances as Beatocello. The biggest-ever individual donation amounted to six million francs, and Richner's legendary twenty-franc-note campaign was also a crucial success. The motto: every franc helps heal, save, prevent. Richner describes the situation in drastic terms: «I used to be an idealist. Now I am a materialist. Quite simply because, in the final analysis, it's all about money.»

Dr. Beat Richner

The achievements of Zurich paediatrician Dr. Beat Richner in Cambodia are worthy of a Nobel Prize. His every day is devoted to Kantha Bopha, no time off, no holidays. He is hospital director, chief physician and, in his own words, a lodge warden with multiple roles to perform. He has no private life,

it vanished at some point, as if he had handed it in to a cloakroom attendant and lost the ticket. Little wonder that Richner appears to be slightly bitter at times – and that he is homesick. «I am not happy, Cambodia is not where I want to be, this is not the life I wanted for myself,» he explains in a very personal interview with *Schweizer Illustrierte*.

A perfect role model

Dr. Beat Richner knows that he still has work to do in Cambodia. «I can't leave until funding for the next 15 years has been secured.» And every further year provides additional proof of the fact that Kantha Bopha should serve as a role model for sustainable health care in the countries of the Third World. Yes, his achievements definitely merit a Nobel Prize!

Thank you for supporting Kantha Bopha!

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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