

Phnom Penh Post

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Executive Director
Asia 2000 Foundation
Wellington
New Zealand

To Whom It may Concern:

For the past six weeks David Venables, a journalism lecturer from Massey University, has been working with us at the *Phnom Penh Post*. His trip was funded by your organization. This letter is to confirm and comment on what David has been doing for us during this period.

David has helped edit stories for the newspaper written by our Cambodian reporters and has run a series of training sessions for them. He has also helped advise us about setting up an English-language program for these reporters. While here, David also covered a regional newspaper editors' conference, producing a fairly substantial report which was published in the *Phnom Penh Post*. I also understand that David has already filed some stories about Cambodia for newspapers in New Zealand and will be writing others.

Overall, David has been an invaluable asset to the *Post* during his stay here. My Khmer reporters have had little formal journalism training so it is extremely useful to have someone with David's expertise be able to work with reporters while they undertake reporting assignments and to comment on their work while in progress. As well, David's ability to provide broader insights into the field of journalism for my Khmer staff have been greatly appreciated.

Unfortunately, the *Phnom Penh Post* is financially a shoe-string operation. We therefore lack the resources to be able to provide our Cambodian staff with on-going journalism training to enhance their reporting capabilities. In this regard, I would like to encourage the Asia 2000 Foundation to consider thinking about supporting the development of a longer-term relationship with the *Post*, one that would both enable New Zealand journalism trainers to acquire greater experience and insights into the complexities of reporting in a Asian country with an infant free press and also be of benefit to Cambodian journalists as they struggle to perfect their craft. In this regard, let me just note that from the Cambodian perspective the needs are enormous, especially in light of the fact that the country has only had a free press for less than eight years.

As an interesting aside, I would also like to note that the *Post* has recently hired as a full time reporter Steven O'Connell, a New Zealand national who has just recently completed his journalism studies. Steven is

now the fourth Kiwi hired by the *Post*. The first two, Matthew Grainger and Jason Barber arrived in Cambodia courtesy of funding from the Asia 2000 Foundation and both subsequently held the position of Managing Editor at the *Post* (first Matt and then Jason) for more than four years in total. Our current Managing Editor, Peter Sainsbury, is likewise a New Zealand native.

The point here is that simply by chance the *Phnom Penh Post* has developed a close connection with New Zealand journalists, one that has been of immense benefit to the growth of what is considered by many to be the best newspaper in Cambodia and one of the best in all of Asia.

In sum, I believe that both Cambodian journalism and New Zealand journalists can benefit by developing this relationship further and encourage the Asia 2000 Foundation to consider ways of helping the *Post* do so.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hayes", written in a cursive style.

Michael Hayes

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief