



Alongside Lao people



ANNUAL REVIEW 2019

Service Fraternel d'Entraide

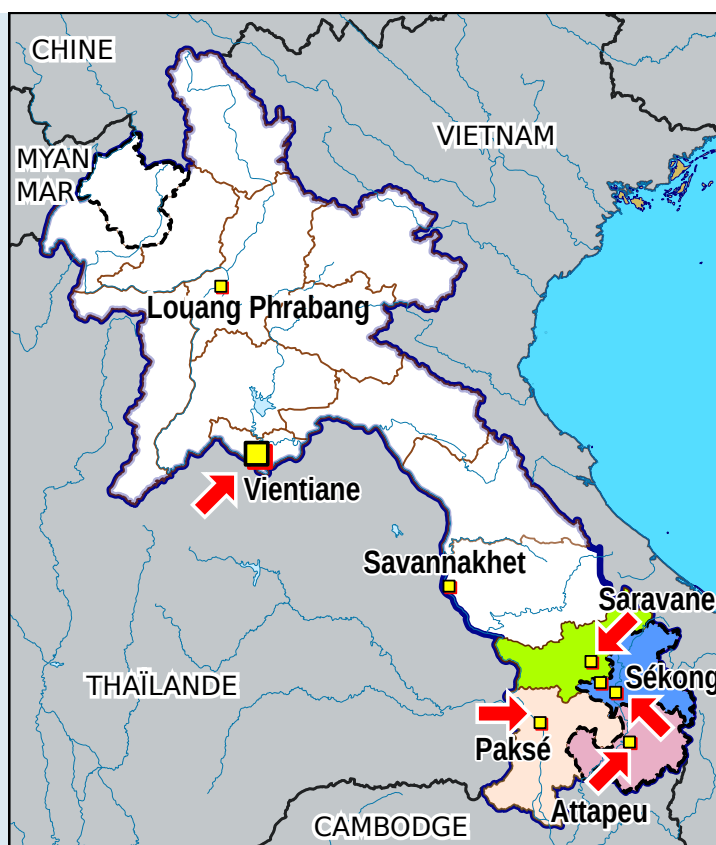
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Where we work

Health Care Strengthening Projects	Sekong Salavan
TerraCare – cooperation with TerraClear	4 provinces
Vientiane Central Office	Vientiane
<i>In preparation</i>	
Inclusion of persons with disabilities Support to the nursing school	Attapeu
<i>Closed</i>	
Community Agriculture Development Project	Thateng Sekong
Attapeu Community Development Project	Attapeu



A Message from the Chairman

In 2019, the community agricultural development projects were completed after 20 years of presence in Attapeu, and 10 years in Kapeu. This work represented an important part of SFE's story that is now over.

Kapeu (Sekong province)

In Kapeu, this project directly impacted the lives of 8,000 beneficiaries, and indirectly another 40,000 beneficiaries among the poorest communities in the Thateng district (Sekong province). Our satisfaction comes from the fact that many families have been able to benefit from pedagogical and practical tools to improve their daily life in a sustainable way, and for those most motivated to start a small agricultural business themselves, ensuring them significant income.

Attapeu

It is in Attapeu, the birthplace of SFE, that the NGO first got involved in 1998, providing technical and medical support to the provincial hospital, then later to the district hospitals. The work then continued for another 9 years in the target villages in the form of integrated rural development through to the end of this year.

2020 sees the emergence of new directions made possible by our experience in the field.

The SFE will not permanently leave the premises in Attapeu and the adventure continues. The strong links forged over the years with health services and other departments of the province have allowed us to conceive new projects together and in particular:

- A 4 year project for the nursing school of Attapeu providing technical and pedagogical support.
- A project to promote comprehensive care for people with disabilities in order to achieve greater social integration.

In 2020, a new project centered on mental health will be launched in the Vientiane region, which also marks SFE's desire to be involved with this population in order to promote their social integration, as they are often excluded due to a lack of adapted structures.

We would like these disability projects to become SFE's third strong axis along with medical and rural development work.

Terra-Care Project

The experience gained through our rural development projects has led us to set up by 2020 a drinking water and sanitation project extended to the 4 provinces of southern Laos. The concept of this project is new for us as it is a partnership with the private non-profit company TerraClear.

The SFE will be in charge of distributing water filters produced locally by Terra Clear, and subsidized by SFE for the poorest families. This low-cost distribution will be accompanied by training on sanitation.

This project is particularly innovative for its carbon footprint. A single filter can reduce a family's annual carbon emissions by one ton.

Sekong and Salavan

In these provinces, SFE will remain focused on its areas of expertise: medical work and rural development in the villages.

The SFE therefore continues in medical work as it has done since the beginning, working from the provincial hospital to the health center. It also associates participatory development projects in the villages. Sekong and Salavan are the two flagship projects of SFE in 2020, with solid teams and well-established concepts!

Many thanks to our donors and to all those who support in one way or another the work of SFE in Laos.

Montbéliard, 20-02-2020

Ph. Klopfenstein



Philippe Klopfenstein

From silk and mulberry to community development 15 years of service at Ban Kapeu (Thateng district, Sekong Province)



Pierre Lugbull

In 2005, connections were established with the village chief of Ban Kapeu who was interested in developing unexploited land. The production of silk, wiped out by the war in 1975, seemed to be a reasonable option for the SFE, because of the possible synergy with the silk development project in Luang Namtha. This complementary activity could provide an income for the families involved, allowing access to health care and schooling. A few plots of mulberry trees were planted as a test even before the official validation of the project in May 2006.

In August 2007, administrative obstacles forced the SFE to stop the Luang Namtha silk project. Part of the human and material resources were transferred to Ban Kapeu. The main donor, the MAAIONG (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs) agreed to work with the SFE in this transfer, allowing new dynamics. The construction of a training center for silk techniques enabled 150 families from 13 villages to take over and own this activity.

The continuation and extension of the project was validated in 2009: this time 245 families were involved. "Model" families with sufficient technical and financial management skills gradually took over from the SFE trainers. The formation of producer groups enabled them to

negotiate the sale of the silk produced. Once they became sufficiently autonomous, the activity was passed on to the villagers. More than 750 000 € were invested between 2006 to 2012.

During this time, the SFE noted deficiencies in the areas of food, health or hygiene. In consultation with 14 villages in the Thateng district, SFE initiated an integrated rural development project (CADP) in 2013. This community project, co-financed by several donors, such as the *Agence Française de Développement* and Tear Australia, focused on food security, access to water and sanitation.

A second phase, still dedicated to the improvement of living conditions, involved 12 other villages. On the agenda: improvement of nutrition by crop diversification and new agricultural techniques (environmental protection, natural resource management); improvement of sanitary systems (water, toilets); development of basic health awareness. The work done with the teachers gave positive results. The partnership established with the water filter company Terra Clear sustained the improvement in hygiene. More than 1,300,000 euros were invested in this community rural development project from 2013 to its closure at the end of 2019.



In 2020, we will continue our development work Alongside Lao People in rural areas

Thomas Nussbaumer

Quality Health Services

Our support in health is centered on two provincial hospitals, Sekong and Salavan, 3 district hospitals and 8 Health Centers. Staff from these health facilities will receive on-the-job trainings by local and international health experts composed of 1 doctor and 2 midwives. Furthermore, material support will also be provided which will help these facilities to improve the services offered to the population and improve coordination between the different levels of the health hierarchy. Both projects are due to end and would be renewed for a further 3-year period.

A new project is to be initiated in Attapeu in 2020. The School of Nursing in Attapeu has requested SFE to support them in strengthening the quality of their services according to the national accreditation standard (better teaching, suitable facilities, improved management). This project would be implemented in coordination with the management team of the school which receives support from the health authorities at provincial and national levels. It will involve a team of 4 national staff and 2 international nurses.

Healthy Communities

Sixteen villages from Sekong and Salavan provinces will benefit from the community development projects of SFE. The communities will be engaged in the development activities of their villages, will be taught to identify their assets and needs, and draft their development plans for areas such as agriculture, water and sanitation, basic health and education etc. This will be done with the support of our national team and 3 international experts (nurse, agriculture specialist and project administrator).

A multi-year collaboration with an organization, TerraClear, has led to a collaborative joint project in 2020. TerraClear produces and sells low-cost ceramic water filters to rural communities which are offered on a 6 month installment payment basis. Whilst most could afford these filters, the poorest cannot afford them. This partnership between SFE and TerraClear allows TerraClear to identify the 10,000 poorest families and provide them with a voucher to buy a highly subsidized filter and also provide them with training on safe water and sanitation including hand washing. SFE will engage 1 international development expert for this project.

Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities

As previously reported in the Annual Review of 2019, social inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) is one of the priority areas in which SFE would like to invest. In Attapeu, training will be provided to the District Office of Social Welfare to identify and assess the needs of PWDs. They will then be linked to supporting structures such as rehabilitation centres, vocational training schools and organizations of people with disabilities (OPD). Through this initiative, communities will be empowered for improved social inclusion of PWDs.

SFE is also honoured to be partnering with one of the few mental health specialists in the country, Dr Chantharavady who will train medical staff at village and district levels to detect and treat people with psychosocial issues. Through this project, training on income generating activities will be provided to concerned patients.

In response to a request from Hands of Hope Center (HoH), SFE will help in establishing a kindergarten for nearly 30 hearing impaired children and youth. SFE will provide assistance through 1 international expert in education to HoH.

Nursing School
Support Project in
Attapeu

Health Education
Development Project
in **Salavan**

Health care
Strengthening Project
in **Sekong**

TerraCare Project in
**Champassak,
Sekong,
Salavan
and Attapeu
Provinces**

Inclusion of People With
Disabilities Project
in **Attapeu** Province

Mental Health Project
in **Vientiane** Province

Support to HoH Deaf Center
in Vientiane

David Mallow

We have also won their hearts...

By the end of 2019 our Attapeu community development project came to an end and this was the last project of its kind in this province. After three years of sharing our time and our lives with the villagers in very remote areas, it has been difficult to say goodbye not just for us, but also for many villagers we have been closely working with. Seeing villagers crying while we were packing for the last time in this village has shown us that apart from just investing in the development of these people and their villages, we have also won their hearts.

In these three years we have been to the villages at least once a month to build capacity, spend time, listening, laughing together and working side by side on the improvement of their lives.

One of the life improving initiatives supported by us during the last year was to assist the villagers in Nongfa to grow cardamom as a cash crop. As the growth of cardamom plants has been very successful this season in the mountains of Sanxay district, we empowered the villagers to generate additional income. By the time we provided small cardamom plants as part of this initiative, the villagers had prepared the ground for planting them and were ready to plant them. Once these plants start bearing their yield, the villagers will be able to sell it to Lao or Vietnamese traders and earn an income from it. We observed that this small income can go a long way especially during seasons in which the rice harvest is insufficient to feed the entire family over the whole year. This additional income would help them to buy enough additional food so that the families are saved from starvation.

Also during the last year of the project, we installed a new gravity fed water system in Dakbok village. As customary, we involved the villagers in this initiative which has given them a sense of ownership and responsibility to maintain it. They carried sand and gravel, mixed the cement and built the water tank themselves, dug for the pipelines to be buried and constructed all parts of the water system in close collaboration with our local construction technician. Now, the villagers are very happy as the water system is completed and the water is flowing into each of their households. They finally have clean water delivered to their dwellings for washing, cooking, drinking, home gardening and to use inside their newly built toilets. The water and sanitation needs of this community have been improved.





Dawn Lewis-Johnson

The second phase of the project reached the end in December, 2019

SFE's Community Agriculture Development Project, located in Thateng District, Sekong Province, Lao PDR reached the end of its second 3-year phase in December 2019. At that time, all project activities and evaluation were completed, SFE closed its Thateng project, and the facilities were returned to the government.

The aim of the second phase of the project, in 12 of the poorest villages of the district, was to sustainably reduce food insecurity in Thateng district. The first phase had focused on agriculture, water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition knowledge transfer. All these activities were carried out in a participative way, based on the needs expressed by the communities. Village Development Committees (VDCs) and model families were central in completing the project.

Now the local communities own their own development



The second phase consolidated the technical work done on agriculture, water and health and made communities resilient in these sectors. The main focus shifted to the empowerment of communities and local actors for an independent response to food insecurity. This was done through VDCs empowerment, local actors' capacity building, and basic education reinforcement. This second phase enabled SFE to withdraw from the target villages while the project's impact was sustained and kept developing.

The external evaluator reported that, "The project strategically focused on empowerment and capacity building providing the district and the communities the technical knowledge (about agriculture, water and sanitation, health and hygiene, education) and the tools to pursue their self-development once the project was over."

SFE is proud of the work that was accomplished in Thateng to reduce food insecurity and improve the lives of the poorest in Thateng District and recognizes that now the local communities own their own development.



Access to quality health services

Training makes the difference

Arnold Probst

A majority of the population in Sekong lives in rural settings and does not have access to quality healthcare. Our aim is to bring quality healthcare to the most remote and poorest areas of South East Asia.

At the very onset of the project, we started to work in three Health centers in the province. These centers were barely used by the people and there was no permanent presence of Healthcare workers to treat patients.

We started activities to train healthcare workers and we implemented a system of continuous improvement of quality of care within the health center. After more than 2 years of work, we have seen a tremendous difference in the use of the health care services. In 2019, the number of consultations in the health centers have been

more than double than that of previous years. The number of correct diagnosis and treatment increased from 40% to more than 90% during the same period. We also recorded a more than 7-fold increase in the number of deliveries in the health centers.

These numbers have a big impact on the villagers. They started to trust the health center. Healthcare has been strengthened and the delay to get health care is shorter than before. Pregnant women are willing to come to the health center for antenatal care. This is a unique opportunity to talk about safe delivery in the Health centers which has resulted in pregnant mothers being motivated to give birth in this health center.

Better health means at the end a better life for the population.



Training in health centers

Help infants to survive at Salavan

Colin Dudgeon

We are always looking for opportunities to improve care for infants and reduce infant mortality rate in Salavan. To achieve this, we take an integrated approach at all levels from villages to health centres to the Provincial Hospital. This year we have provided a range of training programmes as well as essential equipment to achieve this.



SFE provided two ultrasound machines to the Salavan Provincial Hospital, including a mobile one so that we can conduct clinics for the most remote health centres in the areas we serve. Many of our rural village women do not have any ultrasound scanning performed during their pregnancy and hence, estimating the dates of delivery are very difficult and it is also challenging to assess and monitor foetal growth. In September we mobilized a foetal sonography technician from St George's Hospital in London to provide ultrasound training for staff at the Provincial Hospital. This was very well received by the staff, including the Hospital Director who attended the training. They requested for more training to be provided next year as well.

We were very happy to take the mobile ultrasound machine to a village health centre for the first time in December. The hospital director came with us and was very impressed and is keen to do more. In total, 29 pregnant women were screened using the ultrasound scanner and were followed-up. This is a unique practise in the province and probably in the country.

We collaborated with a Japanese NGO, JICA, for a three day Kangaroo Mother Care pre training assessment at

Salavan Provincial Hospital in June. Salavan is one of four hospitals in Laos piloting this care. The SFE training room was used and pre training preparation of equipment, training needs and environment were identified and discussed. SFE identified ways to help with the provision of basic items such as feeding cups, thermometers, baby hats, soap and hand gel which we are working on. We have provided woollen hats for all 4 hospitals in the pilot, thanks to the work of knitters in the UK.

Given that more staff needed training in Early Essential New born Care (EENC), SFE was able to facilitate this training by providing resources such as posters, certificates, snacks and providing access to our training room and equipment. The training was delivered by the SFE trained hospital team using national training material which were also developed with the support of SFE. This was well received by all who attended.

In July, one of our midwifery resource personnel, Alison, attended a two-day conference in Vientiane with the Government and NGO partners to share knowledge about countrywide projects and how we can work better together. Aude attended and contributed to the strategic meeting for village health volunteers, also in Vientiane. Invitations to such meetings are a great opportunity for SFE to be heard as technical experts in these discussions and also to be a spokesperson for the more remote provinces where our challenges are diverse.

The work of SFE in Salavan is receiving national recognition with requests from NGOs and Government to share the methods and trainings we have developed.



The context of people with disabilities in Laos

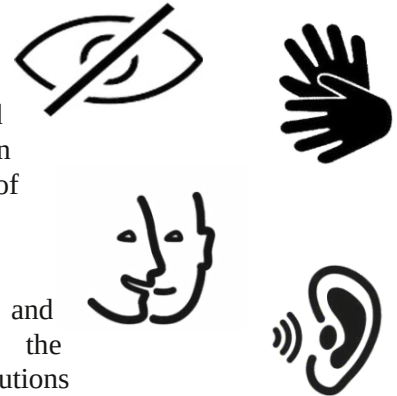
Thomas Nussbaumer

Target 10 of the “Sustainable Development Goals for 2030” is the empowerment and social, economic and political integration of all people, “regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”. Laos appropriated this vision by transcribing it in the Disability Law, adopted at the end of 2018, which states that “*persons with disabilities should not suffer discrimination on the basis of their gender, age, social status, education level, faith, ethnicity, or because of their disability, and have the right to enjoy full equality with others politically, legally, economically, culturally, socially and in the family [...]*”.

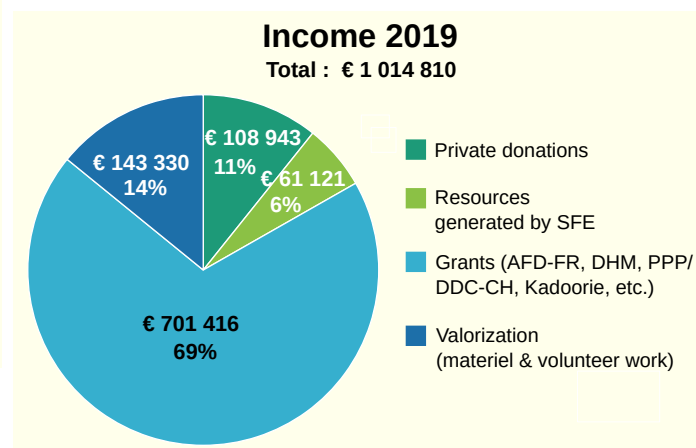
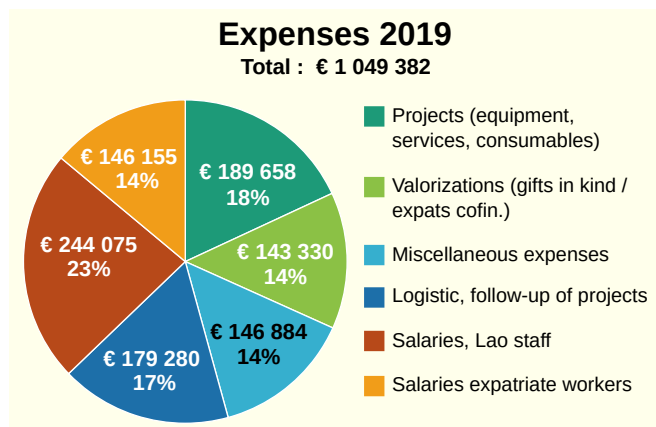
While progress is being made at the political level to create a legal framework for the inclusion of people with disabilities, the reality for these persons in real life remains complicated. Para-governmental associations and organizations, with the support of some NGOs, are carrying out projects that are improving people's lives, but this is limited to the capital and some of the provinces. These initiatives have not yet reached the south of Laos, where there the need is crucial : For years, through community and hospital development projects, the SFE has been in contact with people who have been rejected because of their disability, shut away in the back of a house or in a hut in the forest, or

worse... There are many barriers to accessing education, work, rehabilitation or adapted health care, even when the family is of good will.

It will take time and resources for the country's good resolutions to have a concrete impact in the southern provinces, but SFE can serve as a facilitator and accelerator in this process by building the capacity of local levels of government (provinces and districts) to better identify persons with disabilities and their needs so that they can be linked to the few existing services. There will then be a great deal of work to be done to diversify and make these services accessible to all. But rather than let ourselves be discouraged by the long road ahead, we choose through our first project “inclusion of people with disabilities in Attapeu”, to take a first step on this long road alongside our Laotian partners.



Financial report



Impact: main data

21

Years of Experience in Laos

21

Projects 4 ongoing in 2019

60

Local Employees

15

Expatriates

In 2019, SFE provided support to more than 14,000 people



1900

Children get better education



5100

People accessing clean water and sanitation



300

Persons trained in the medical field

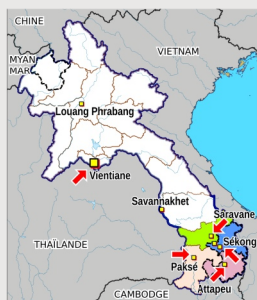


4500

People get better agriculture



Thomas and Lydia Nussbaumer
Joakim, Axel, Zoé, Lucy
Director of SFE – Vientiane



Thomas and Florence Steffen
Administration and



Arnold and Monika Probst
Anaïs, Siméon, Matthieu
Hospital Project – Sekong



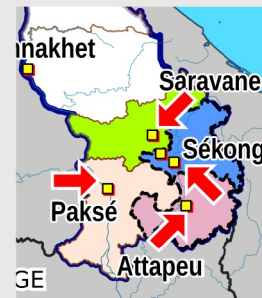
Colin and Alison Dudgeon
Hospital/community Project
Salavan



Aude and Vanh Kèovongkhot
Lucy, Léon
Hospital/community Project
Salavan



Dawn Lewis-Johnson
Terra-Care Project
The four Southern
Provinces



Yannick and Célie Wagner
Léana, Mila
Supp. to Nursing school &
Handic. Projects, Attapeu



Leah Doty
Insertion of Handicapped people
Project, Attapeu



Ruth and David Mallow Marcasi
Supp. to Nursing school
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