



Alongside Lao people

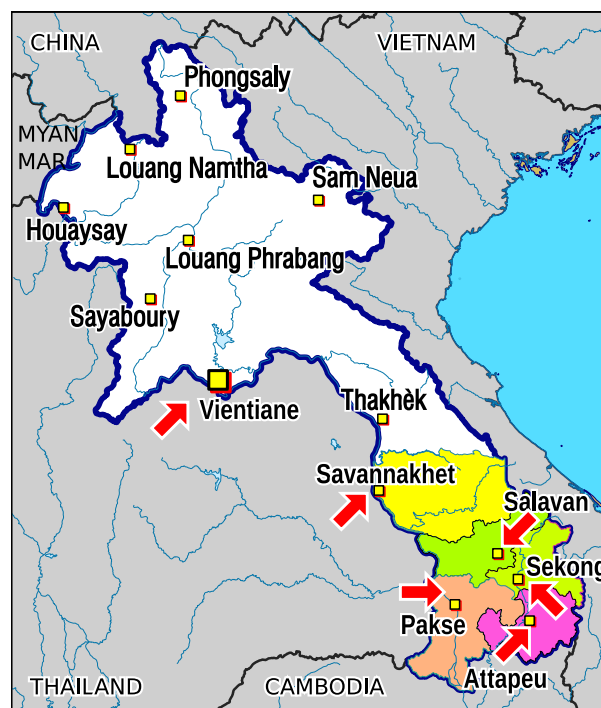


ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

Service Fraternel d'Entraide

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A message from the Chairman

Dear friends of the SFE,

For almost two years now, the world has been experiencing a pandemic that we would never have imagined.

This epidemic has upset all of our projects in Laos, with repeated “stopping and going,” requiring us to constantly revise our programs and redo our schedules.

On site, our expatriates are fatigued by the long periods of isolation lasting many months, keeping them from taking any real vacations in Asia over the past two years.

Many of their return trips to Europe have been cancelled, due to the closure of the Lao borders until the end of 2021, so that some have remained in the country for three to four years now. This seems inconceivable, when you consider that we live in an age of internet and immediate news!

In spite of all these constraints, all our projects in 2021 have been carried out practically as planned:

- our health projects in the provinces of Saravane, Sekong and Attapeu and in particular in connection with mental health in Vientiane;
- improving food safety and access to water in Saravane and Sekong, and of course the Terra-Care campaign: 10,000 water filters for the poorest families in southern Laos;
- the projects for promoting social inclusiveness for all in Sekong and Attapeu.

More than ever we want to stay on course, and our objectives have not changed!

- Serving the most disadvantaged
- Transferring skills
- Transforming lives

By living alongside the people of Laos and working with them on a daily basis, we can achieve these objectives; even in the midst of a pandemic, proximity remains one of the major assets of SFE.

All this leads us to believe that 2022 will be, of course, a year full of challenges but also full of beautiful achievements if we hold onto our objectives and refuse to allow these difficult times to push us to withdraw or become indifferent.

In SFE, it is hope that keeps us going: hope in spite of a sometimes hopeless world, hope that we can make a difference, hope that the impossible, one day... becomes possible.

I would like to thank all those who make this work possible through their participation, and thus build this hope into something great:

- the fifteen or so expatriates on-site with the Lao-tian teams who are on location day after day and often adapt with self-sacrifice to the most difficult situations;
- the volunteers in Europe who are working on these projects;
- all our donors who, year after year, generously contribute to this work.
- A huge thank you to all of you. You allow us to believe that our commitment in Laos still makes sense in 2022!

For SFE

Philippe Klopfenstein



Investing in people



Thomas Nussbaumer

In SFE we are all about investing in people. Thus our motto: “Alongside Lao People”. We believe that giving knowledge, know-how and opportunities will have a long lasting impact in families and communities. This is why all our projects are run by highly qualified professionals in health, agriculture, water and sanitation, education or social work. These experts with a high level of education and large experience now volunteer to learn Lao language and participate in our projects as trainers and coaches, to ensure quality, vision and a people centered work.

Investing in people is not the easy path. It is much easier to provide material help and quick fixes. Investing in people takes time, skills, and intentionality. But it is worth it! We see people discover their potential and change their environment for the best. Somkhith's testimony is an example of what we hope for, for our staff, the beneficiaries of our projects, our partners. This is how SFE will continue its work in Laos in 2022, enabling people to progress, helping them discover their potential and giving them hope until they can themselves share this hope with others. We are so privileged to walk day after day alongside such amazing people!



Somkhith Loi Inthong

My name is Somkhith Loi Inthong. I have been working for SFE since 2004 at the SFE head office in Vientiane capital, Lao PDR. First, I worked as a cashier and then I changed to the position of accountant. Then it was not long until I was promoted as chief accountant, and then to Human Resource Manager. It was a big change for me from working in finance to managing the staff and taking care of SFE policies. I also managed the SFE head office, was responsible for the authorisation of expenses and participated in negotiating contracts with ministries and authorities.

During that time I learnt many things from the SFE director. Then I was promoted to Operational Manager. I am still responsible for HR work and finance. I am the chairperson of the board meeting for Lao people, responsible for the work plans of staff in the head office in Vientiane, and I support projects if they need help. I am also a part of the executive team that manages SFE, deciding about policies, rules of organisation and the roles of staff. I participate in the improvement of the SFE working system. I follow up the staff's work to meet deadlines and finish the work on time.

I have learnt a lot from the executive team about management work and organization. My degree is not in management work, but SFE gave me the opportunity to manage and learn at the same time, alongside the Country Representative, executive team and other colleagues. From the beginning until now, my perspective of the working system has been improved in a positive way. Team members have more and more opportunities to participate and share ideas.

In the future, I would like to continue my work and know more about projects and how to help and support them. If possible, I also hope to continue my studies in organizational management.

Testimony on the collaboration between B4Lao Training Center and SFE

Nathan Inthasone

In the year 2016, the relationship between B4Lao Training Center and SFE was started. Since then, we have been in contact and helping each other, especially helping B4Lao Director Mr. Nathan

Inthasone to write project proposals to find funds for our training center. In the early days of our training center, SFE also helped us find

placements for student interns, especially in agricultural activities. Sometimes trainers from the SFE-Kapeu project in Xekong province came to Savannakhet to train our students in topics such as mushroom planting, catfish and cricket raising and sustainable agriculture.



Sometimes, when SFE had staff retreats, B4Lao also sent some of our staff to join the program for improve our staff's working skills.



I remember when the disastrous flood happened in Attapeu in 2018, SFE and B4Lao joined those in the villages to help people there.



SFE has always provided facilitation, consultation and assistance for staff training,

especially training employees in financial and accounting systems; training was conducted in the SFE office in Vientiane and also in Savannakhet at the B4Lao Training Center. Through these trainings, we were able to organize the center's financial accounting system at a high standard. Every month the B4Lao Training Center sends accounting documents to SFE for them to examine, check and give feedback on what the accounting staff of B4Lao

are still lacking in accounting documents. This ensures that the relationship between B4Lao and SFE is always in good shape. Currently, we are pursuing a new partnership through the Aid and Development Foundation. If possible, we want to ask the foundation to raise funds for people with disabilities and other disadvantages to get help for their vocational studies and start their own small businesses to improve their lives and not descend into poverty.

Finally, we want to thank SFE for being with us and helping us until

now and also in the future, until we can stand by ourselves and be sustainable. If our dream comes true, we will not just receive help but will be the one giving and supporting the people who are in need.



Hope for the family of Mr Moon

Thippachan Phanthakesongh



As a trainer for the TerraCare program, Thip trains families about the need to drink clean water and have a toilet instead of open defecation. She also trains the families to wash their hands before they cook food, before they eat, and after defecation. Finally, she gives needy families the option to pay a small amount and get a Terra-

would sometimes try to use local herbal remedies, which only sometimes worked.

Once they received the TerraClear water filter for their own home, Mr. Moon and Mrs. Paun said they immediately noticed that their life was better. They stopped being sick as much and had more energy. Since they were no longer scrounging all available cash for medicine and medical care, they suddenly found they could start saving a small amount of money. Something really changed for them. Mr. Moon and Mrs. Paun began to think of a better future for their family. They have now decided to try to save for a small tok tok tractor to help with their farming, which would mean better crop production and would make their labor hire out at a higher wage.

Clear water filter for their home. During her visit to Nam Bong Village in Paksong, southern Laos in January, Thip came across the family of Mr. Moon (35) and his wife, Mrs. Paun (30), who are part of the ethnic minority group of the YaHern people. They have 5 children: 3 girls (1, 3, and 10) and 2 boys (ages 5 and 7) and they live in a small wooden house that they built from trees and branches. Nam Bong Village is remote and difficult to access.



When Thip returned to give the family another training about health and sanitation, she noticed that the family looked healthier. Thip was so happy to hear about their dreams and hopes for a bright future for their family and children.

Thip said, "I can see in our pictures that this family is healthier now. They have learned so much from the program and benefited from the filter. Like for all the families that benefit from the TerraCare program, I am so happy to be part of making this family's dreams come true!"

Mr. Moon's family was overjoyed at the opportunity to get a drinking water filter for their home. Normally, they would try to boil water to drink, but they only had a small pot and could not boil enough water for all of their family.

When the family went to the field to work, they drank water exclusively from open water sources like small streams. Consequently, the family often suffered from diarrhea, stomachache, and headache from dehydration. When they could afford it, they tried to go to the village health center for their illnesses, but Mr. Moon rarely had excess money to pay for medicine or health care. Instead, he

Mr Moon's family



The TerraCare program brings hope and positive change to needy families all throughout southern Laos. Thank you for your interest and support!

Filters for clean water



TerraClear

- Filter element: silver-infused ceramic
- Greater than 99% reduction in bacteria
- Food grade BPA-free storage receptacle
- More than 100,000 sets sold since 2010
- Rattan stand for safe filter placement
- Easy to use, clean and maintain
- 36 liters clean water storage
- Includes a 2-year warranty



New! 600ml stainless steel insulated water bottle for safe water to go

99,000
KIP!

690,000
KIP!



terracclear.org
info@terracclear.org

A little hope of survival

Joe Somphy PHOMMATHEP

PM OF HEDP II, SFE SALAVAN

In July 2021 I was visiting the neonatal intensive care unit at Salavan Provincial Hospital. Along with one of our expatriate health advisors we were having our weekly management meeting and tour.

We came across one family with a premature baby who was about six months old and just admitted to hospital that day. The baby's condition was not good, and the whole family seemed to have lost their hope for him to survive as he was so tiny and thin. He could not breastfeed well and was deteriorating.

At first the parents did not want to bring him to the hospital, they knew that it was very rare for babies like this to survive. Many premature babies in their villages had passed away and so for them it was hopeless. But the grandmother insisted they bring him to hospital; she did have a little hope that he would survive if they brought him on time to receive care.

Salavan hospital had introduced Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC), a powerful and easy-to-use method to promote the health and wellbeing of preterm infants which involves the mother and family. It is the practice of early, continuous and prolonged skin-to-skin contact between infant and mother, along with exclusive breastfeeding when possible. In developing countries, for low-birthweight infants it has been shown to reduce mortality, severe illness, infection and length of hospital stay. The family were happy to try this and the hospital provided encouragement and good monitoring.

A few weeks later, the baby's condition had improved considerably, he was feeding well on breast milk from mother. As well as the parents, grandmother took her turn to do KMC by putting the baby on her chest to keep him warm. Through this care, it brought a new hope of survival to the whole family for their first baby and grandchild.

Salavan provincial hospital does this well. In 2020, they presented KMC as their good practice at the National Health Research Forum and won the award for best quality improvement in healthcare.

This experience also gives me a new hope because as I write this my wife and I are waiting for the birth of our first baby. I know that should we have a premature baby, this care with the support of the hospital staff would help my child to survive and have a good start to life and a future.

Sadly, many premature babies pass away each year in Laos as often we do not have the necessary equipment, especially in the countryside. But KMC shows what can be done without equipment and technology. My hope is that this good model from our hospital will spread out all around the country so that more premature children will have more chance to survive and discover this beautiful world.



Doctor Souliphone building up expertise for the future

Sukkula VANNAVONG



Doctor Souliphone is a medical doctor who has worked in Sekong provincial hospital for many years. After graduating from university she was not able to enroll in postgraduate training, instead coming directly to Sekong to work in the internal medicine department. Her theoretical knowledge was good, but she had limited opportunities to be trained in a practical way.

After starting work as a junior doctor in the hospital, Doctor Souliphone realized that she had some training gaps in her curriculum but was unable to access quality training in her region. When she realized that SFE offered practical on-site training for doctors, she was very motivated to participate and to learn more. She took the opportunity to learn how to perform gastroscopies and she is currently being trained in a specialty for

treating patients with diabetes and hypertension. Over the years, she has developed a great interest not only in learning but also in teaching other staff with less knowledge than her. She has now become a senior doctor in the hospital and is gaining more and more responsibility in training the new generation of doctors.

We hope that she will continue to enjoy her responsibilities and be able to share her knowledge with others in order to better serve the population of this remote, rural province of southern Laos.

We hope that the skills and knowledge that were transmitted to Doctor Souliphone will be transmitted to the next generation, which will help increase the overall quality of doctors working in hospitals for the Laotian population.



The hope of a successful education...



We all live lives with different backgrounds, stages and starting points. We all have different dreams, goals and definitions of life. And we all have hope to continue living, because hope is the incentive and motivation for people's lives.

Hope is the common factor in life. It means a chance - a chance to receive, to win, to do something, to complete, to create and to start. It includes all the goals or desires we want to achieve. Our hopes may or may not come true, and the outcomes are something we do not know and cannot control. Hope is what is given by the scholarships that the SFE Attapeu Nursing School Project (ANSP) provides to enable some students to enter the Attapeu Nursing School. These

students live in remote and mountainous areas, come from poor families and have no access to professional training and quality health care, yet they dream of studying and working in the field of nursing. The ANSP team saw the determination of these students despite access constraints, and provided them with support scholarships to make their dreams come true. The scholarships offered have improved their lives. The students are motivated and encouraged to continue their studies, with the hope of succeeding in nursing and improving the well-being of their families and communities. These students will enable others to gain knowledge and understanding of medical treatments and the importance of health, while informing those in their hometowns of educational opportunities.

Latdavanh SOUDTHYSANE



At the end of this journey, what sustains our work is the hope of a successful education for the students and the hope of better access to health and education for an entire rural population.



Ngo's hopes and dreams

Lae VIENGSAVATH

Ngo is 21 years old and lives in Sanamxay district, Attapeu province. He lives with his family of six people, of whom he is the third child. When Ngo was born with a disability, his mother had no idea what to do or where to go to get treatment for her son. The family's village is close to the mountains and cliffs, far from the bigger town, cutting off access to timely and appropriate services that could have helped him.

Ngo loves to learn. He studied hard all the way from elementary to high school—earning high marks, ranking second place in his class, and even graduating from high school. Ngo likes to smile and laugh and has a personable manner. He has good friendships with his classmates and others around him, and many people like to joke around and spend time with him.

I met Ngo through SFE's Attapeu Disability Inclusion Project, where I work as a facilitator. My colleagues and I surveyed his village to identify people with disabilities and learn about their daily lives and any help they may need.

As I got to know Ngo, he told me that there are some people who don't like him. This is because the shape of his body and face are different from others, which leads people to discriminate against him without a second thought. His speech is slow and faltering, and his movements are awkward and imprecise. His arms and legs are not straight and he walks with a limp. Because of these differences, some people don't want to be around him.

Ngo also told me that he has a dream to be an IT specialist and write code for a living. His humble hope is that people will see his intelligence, which is no different from others. His ambition is to study IT and build a fulfilling career. He dreams of the opportunity to study at a university that would ac-

commodate someone with a disability, without discrimination.

He is ready to face the challenges that will come with pursuing IT studies. There will be times of great difficulty, because some daily activities like maintaining personal hygiene and dressing himself are difficult for him to do alone. Even now, when Ngo's family goes to work in the field for months at a time, he is left alone and struggles to take care of himself. He relies on others to bring him food because he's not able to cook. Because of challenges like this, Ngo wants help accessing physiotherapy so that he can make better use of his body. This will also pave the way for him to study IT and pursue his dream career.

Now that our SFE team has surveyed a number of villages in Ngo's area, and made connections with hundreds of people like him, we hope to help him and others with disabilities access the health and rehabilitation services they need, reach their own goals, and participate fully in their communities without discrimination.



A fruitful collaboration in a crisis, a source of hope for many inhabitants

Ruth MARCASI

The first COVID-19 case in Attapeu province was identified in April 2021. Attapeu was one of the two last provinces in the Lao PDR that was able to strengthen its barricades against the early entry of COVID-19. Health leaders strategized to buy some time for preparing the facilities, equipping front-liners, and coordinating with different local department units and other NGOs for support.

Since the adoption of this strategic move, SFE has been part of the movement. Through the Emergency COVID-19 Response project, SFE has been one of the helping hands and partner of the Provincial Health Department in ensuring the readiness and preparedness of the public health system as a whole. This project was put in place to ensure health care providers' readiness to combat the surge of the COVID-19 in the province. This one-year emergency aid activity focused on strengthening and equipping the key frontliners with essential knowledge and skills on how to provide care for suspected and diagnosed COVID-19 patients, along with providing essential medical equipment and small construction projects inside the health care facilities to accommodate COVID-19 patients at the provincial level, and even at the district level.

Apparently, neither developed nor developing countries are experts in containing this global crisis that the world is facing at the moment. This fits with the current situation of the local authorities in Attapeu. Everybody



is and was in the state of learning and internalizing the current situation in order to cope with it. Like any other country or region, the province of Attapeu encountered the main challenges of having limited resources, less equipped facilities and a lack of experience in dealing with SARS-CoV 2 types of case. These issues required an urgent action plan and needed to be dealt with promptly. With the use of available resources and the project of SFE as an aid, Public Health services in Attapeu was able to take care of and contain as much as possible the number of local contaminations.

The challenges mentioned above have never been a hindrance for the health authorities to keep fighting. Instead, the Public Health Authorities stepped up and were resilient, determined, and persevering in strict lock-down measures and an intensive vaccination campaign, while advocating for the strict compliance to the public and social health protocols in order for the people to be emotionally and physically safe.

This action of the health authorities in Attapeu has been one of the sources of hope for many people in Attapeu. People see that perseverance, hard work, and strong leadership are keeping the population of Attapeu safe. This was indeed appreciated by their own people.

The hope and trust developed towards the public health during this pandemic have been an encouragement not only for us as an international partner, but all the more for the local health authorities to keep persevering in improving the health system to be able to keep the people in Attapeu healthy.

Long live Attapeu!



Take care of our mental health

Dr Choulamy CHANTHARAVADY



Support for a fledgling local organisation

In the perspective of supporting local organisations, and at the request of one of our donors, the Kadorie Charitable Foundation, the SFE supports the project of two Laotian doctors to help them set up a local organisation for the mental health of their compatriots.

Docteur Sengdara
VONGSOUVAN



A good mental health contributes to our well-being and gives us the ability to enjoy life and to cope with the challenges we face. When we have problems, it is important that we try to solve them by ourselves first. But if we get stuck, we need to find someone we trust to help us by listening to our problems.

We want the person to whom we reveal our pain to listen carefully. This person should listen to our words, voice, silences, rhythm and intonations. They should take in every part of the message conveyed verbally or non-verbally, and at the same time see our expressions, attitudes and emotions without interpreting or judging. This person should ensure good communication, stay focused on the person sharing and make sure to hear the message well. They may need to repeat in their own words what they have just heard, both to ensure their own understanding and also to show that they have heard and integrated the message we have given them. Being listened to by someone we trust is a great relief to our grief!

Asking someone for help is neither a weakness nor a source of shame. We must give others the opportunity to listen to us. Reaching out shows that we have already taken a big step forward in sharing our worries, and therefore in taking care of our mental health.

As a mental health professional, I would like everyone to have a good mental health. Then we would have real fitness, not feel physical or mental pain and have a sense of well-being in body, mind and community. I want all of us to have good relationships with others, to work well and to enjoy our lives.

So let's take steps together toward a good mental health, which allows us to lead fulfilling lives.

Year 2021 in a few key figures



710

People trained
in medical
field



990

People get better
agriculture
practice



17900

People accessing
clean water and
sanitation



1070

People with
disabilities in
contact

7

Ongoing
projects

42

Local
Employees

20

Expatriates

Key figures

Impact of SFE to date

23 years of experience in Laos

46 700

people
supported
by SFE

23

Years of
Experience
in Laos

26

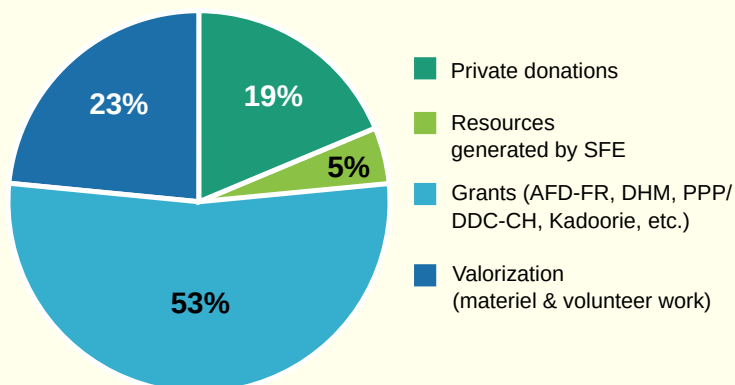
multi-year
projects
set-up

2700

health
staff
trained

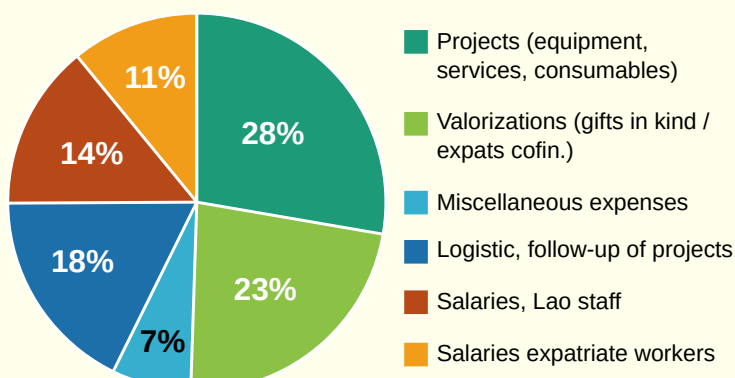
Income 2021

Total : € 1 197 466



Expenses 2021

Total : € 712 108



Financial report

Donors



Working partners





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