



Alongside Lao People

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

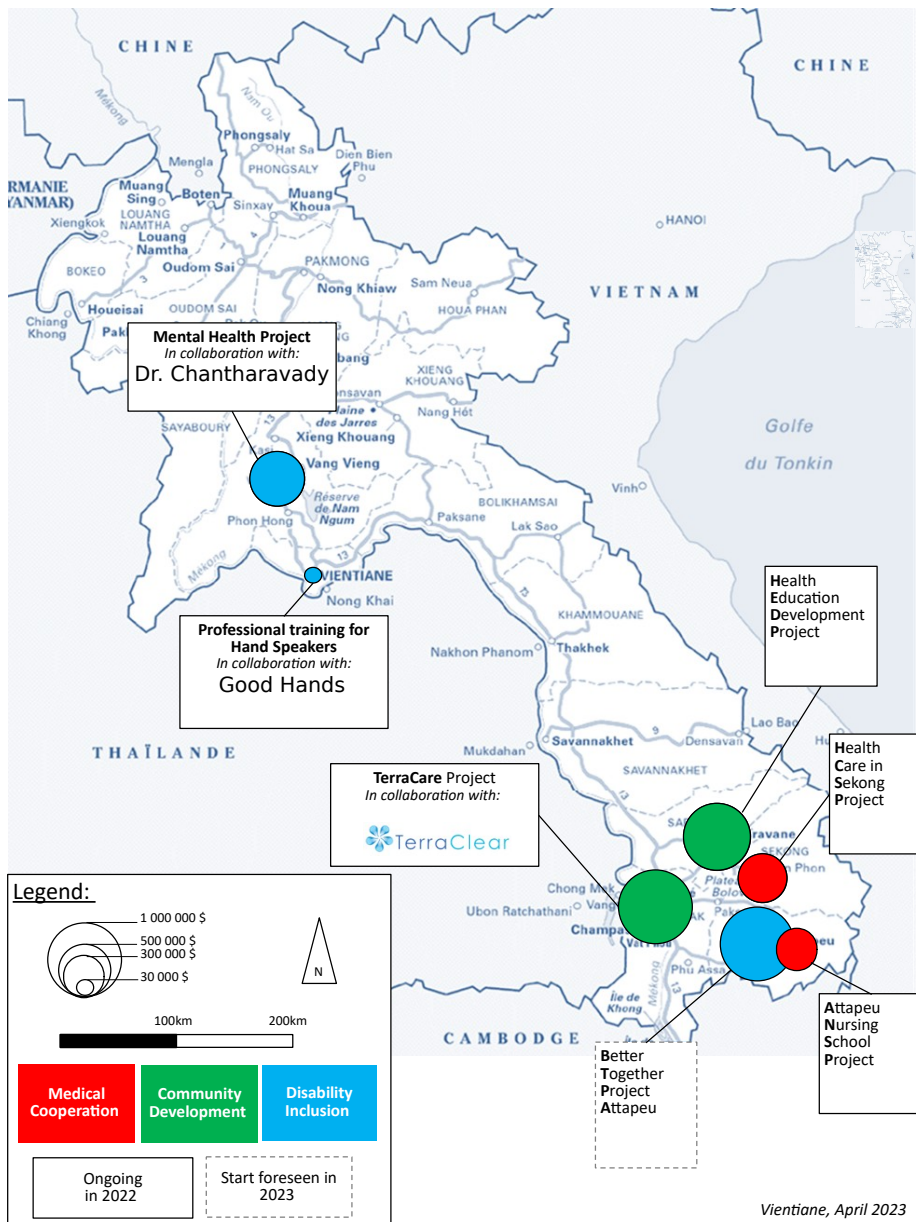
Service Fraternel d'Entraide

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Projects and perspectives 2023

Alongside Lao People



Vientiane, April 2023

The message from the Chairman

One could say that 2022 was the year of recovery after the COVID-19 crisis. SFE was affected like others in our position, but to our great surprise all our projects in Laos continued, albeit in adapted mode, and were able to survive this crisis.

Thus in 2022, after several periods of confinement, we experienced within our projects:

- The resumption of activities in the villages, bringing us back in contact with the most destitute. For us, this is a fundamental element and perhaps even SFE's trademark: staying in close contact with the people to whom we are committed.
- The resumption of international trips, with many of our Laos-based members returning home on leave, and the members of the Board visiting Laos after a three-year interruption.
- The resumption of personal contact, productive exchanges and life in the village communities.

We have realized that two years of confinement and video-conferencing have made us want more real contact, but that we also have to make the effort to get out of the comfort of the screen to take the risk of the relationship.

In the field of relationships, you will discover in this report another feature of our organization, with examples of partnerships established by SFE.

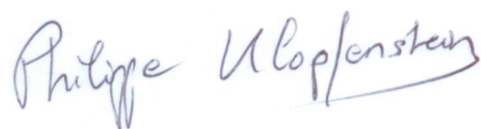
SFE was founded in 1998. Over the past 25 years we have developed numerous collaborations which are of great importance to us, because we do not want to work alone. We need these interconnections.

This is an opportunity for us to warmly thank all the partners who have accompanied us for all these years.

A huge thank you to all the members, donors, volunteers and partners who are involved in the work of SFE in Laos and in Europe.

Montbéliard, 17-02-2023

Philippe Klopfenstein



An intense and interesting year



Thomas Nussbaumer

The year 2023 promises to be an intense and interesting one!

Inclusion projects are on the rise...

We already talked about it last year, and the disability inclusion project in Attapeu should see the light of day mid-2023. Governmental

authorizations are underway as well as proposals to potential donors. Starting a 3-year project in the field of inclusion, in collaboration with the rehabilitation unit of the Attapeu hospital, is the result of several years of work and inaugurates this relatively new action component of SFE.

In Vientiane, we are also preparing to intensify the partnership with the "Good Hand-Speakers" initiative, which promotes the professional integration of deaf people. Two volunteers will develop the activities of sign language promotion and professional and individual training in the field of hospitality and catering.

Continuing by readjusting

Several 3-year projects have passed the mid-project stage: community and hospital projects in Salavan and Sekong a partnership with the Attapeu School of Nursing, TerraCare (in partnership with the TerraClear company), and the Mental health Project in Vientiane Province. It is time to define the direction for the future by involving all the partners concerned at all levels (government, civil society, private). External evaluation processes in several of these projects should provide us with valuable indications as to the readjustments to be made in our methods and activities, as the needs, context and best practices are constantly evolving.

Fixed point

What does not change, however, is our commitment to do our utmost, together with all our partners, to ensure that every Lao person can live a decent, healthy life and develop his or her full potential within their community.



"Better Together" at Attapeu

Karina PONT



In Attapeu, many people who cannot go out to the fields

to work are left at home during the day, or sometimes for a few days, while the rest of the family are in the fields. However, for people with reduced mobility, it is difficult to complete everyday tasks because of their disability. Many cannot go to the market, cook for themselves, or even boil water to drink. When they try to access health care, they are often treated poorly by the staff and find it difficult to access health facilities, as well as accessing the community and their homes, which do not cater to their needs.

Ideally, people with disabilities would be able to access basic rehabilitation services at the provincial hospital. However, most people with disabilities are not aware of any services that can help them improve their functioning, and the rehabilitation department at the provincial hospital is ill-equipped to help people with disabilities.

Currently the rehabilitation department at Attapeu Provincial Hospital currently has two physiotherapists and one physiotherapy volunteer working full-time in a small treatment area. They usually see between two and five patients a day for help with back pain or sciatica, treating with traditional medicine (acupuncture and cupping) and massage.

The physiotherapists say they would like to be able to help people with disabilities by providing rehabilitation. However, the rehabilitation space is very small and they do not have the necessary equipment to treat them. They have, therefore, requested that SFE help them by providing the necessary equipment so they can help more people, and are happy to receive training to enable them to use the equipment. These changes will improve the quality of treatment they can provide to patients welcomed to the Rehabilitation Unit.

The Better Together Project in Attapeu has spent the past year preparing for a new project, which will begin in July 2023. We have been working



with the Provincial Health Department, Rehabilitation Unit as well as the results from the Pilot Phase to design a project that will partner with the Rehabilitation Unit to address the needs of people with mobility problems in eight villages so they can have improved functioning, health and wellness through better access to health and rehabilitation.

To enable the Rehabilitation Unit to welcome and treat people with disabilities at Attapeu Hospital, the project will focus on training the three physiotherapists and providing adequate material and resources to improve the quality of care. The project will also provide rehabilitation in the homes of people with mobility problems in eight villages, which the physiotherapists will also participate in.

This project has set up a partnership with the Lao foundation ADF (see page 11) to develop the socio-inclusive and advocacy part of disability in the communities.



Partnership at the heart of the project

Célie WAGNER

Our partnership with the Attapeu Health Vocational Training Center (AHVTC) is at the heart of Attapeu Nursing School Project (Attapeu Nursing School Project), since the early stages. Indeed, the project was built jointly with AHVTC, SFE and the Provincial Health Department, and since then, all three partners have implemented it together.

It is important for the project to work in close relationship with the Training Center's staff, because they need to be actively involved in the project activities. The project does not replace the responsibilities of the Training Center's staff, but rather the expertise of SFE staff supports and empowers the Training Centre.

The ANSP team does not decide on their own what trainings to organize, but regular meetings are held to discuss together what the Training Center's needs are (in terms of training, coaching, material, etc.), how the project can support them, when to implement the activities according to the school's timetable, and what budget is needed.

The project team is working closely with Mrs Kankeo, a staff of the Training Center who is the project coordinator, and also with the head of the different units and directors of the Training Center,



to plan and implement the activities. For example, pedagogic training sessions are planned and organized with the project coordinator, but also with the head of the Training Center's technical unit. The activities supporting the implementation of the Quality Assurance system are discussed and planned with Mrs Vanoly, a teacher responsible for the implementation of the QA.

Mrs. Kankeo, the project coordinator, said:

“SFE and AHVTC work together for the development of the Center. It means that we are defining goals, planning work, implementing and solving problems together, learning from each other. It is not only about work, it is also building good relationships during work in order to create a good work atmosphere because we are together both in times of difficulty and success. For every activity implemented, the productivity relies on

the cooperation between SFE and AHVTC. Both sides need to be involved and share ideas. Without support and collaboration we would not be able to achieve our common goals.”

Mrs. Latdavanh, a local staff of ANSP:

“The project cannot be carried out if the Training Center doesn't provide data on their needs and their difficulties, without which we could not design the activities to support them. Therefore a partnership between both the project and the Training Center is important. To implement the activities we have to plan and discuss. After every activity we reflect on what was successful and what was challenging, and discuss solutions together.”



The dynamic of sharing

Annecilia Alcindor

Since 2014, SFE has been implementing a project to strengthen the health system in Sekong Province, in partnership with the provincial department of health.

The project activities are carried out with a dynamic of knowledge-sharing in the medical field. There is a strong emphasis on local ownership. Using a 'Training of Trainers' model, the project's expatriate experts have trained and continue to support a group of doctors, nurses and midwives from the provincial hospital. SFE works with this team to implement project activities. The SFE team in Sekong also accompanies other health officials on village activities.

In addition, long-term collaboration with the provincial health department over the years has strengthened the capacity of local authorities to work together in planning, implementing and monitoring activities. Local authorities are involved at all levels, from the management of the provincial health department to village leaders and the management of partner health centers and hospitals.

After more than 8 years in the province, the project is entering a phase of gradual withdrawal. For this reason, SFE Sekong launched a project last year to capitalize



"Nang Noi" program to raise adolescent girls' awareness of health, puberty and sexuality - in partnership with UNFPA¹

¹ UNFPA is the lead United Nations agency for sexual and reproductive health.

on the experience of all these years of collaboration. The aim of this project is to clearly identify good practices and lessons learned in order to share them within SFE and with other health actors in the country (ministries and NGOs).

In particular, the ongoing capitalization effort focuses on the long-standing partnership between SFE and the provincial health department, our government partner.

Testimony of Doctor Phoukhan Chanthavong, Deputy Director of the Sekong Provincial Health Department:

The partnership with SFE Sekong is an opportunity to get support to develop the quality of services and care in the province. If you compare the years before the project and now, public health has improved. Health workers, whether in the provincial hospital, district hospitals or health centres, have improved their skills, especially through the short and long courses supported by SFE. Health services have also improved, with better waste management and a water system adapted to the needs of the provincial hospital. People in the partner villages now have latrines, access to clean water and are aware of the importance of good hygiene in their community.

Our years of partnership have taught us that development planning needs to be focused, with clear objectives and the resources needed to succeed (people, knowledge and skills). Good coordination and follow-up to encourage the

different actors are essential to identify and solve problems effectively. Finally, we have learnt how important it is for health workers to love their work and to serve patients with respect and honesty, without expecting anything in return.

Our main challenge now is to ensure the sustainability of the various activities we have undertaken together. We must therefore continue to work together and improve continuously to achieve this and be a model for other health services.



The Women of Eleung Village

Colin DUDGEON



Eleung village in Lao Ngam district of Salavan province is very special. Seven of the 12 members of the Village Development Committee (VDC) are women. One is also deputy village chief. It may not surprise you that our team will tell you that Eleung is the best organised, most cooperative, cleanest and creative of the 10 villages we partner with!

A VDC is formed in each of our partner villages where it is the main agent for sustainable behaviour change. They are chosen by the community and consists of people willing to work for the development of their village, regardless of their social level. The committee meets at least once a month to reflect, discuss and act for the development of their community.

We say at least half of the VDC should be women but, as this is countercultural, in practice it is not usually achieved. In other villages women are in the minority, sometime only two or three but our team encourages them, giving opportunity for men and women to speak equally.

In Eleung there are 59 households, now every one of them has a toilet. The villagers even began digging the holes in anticipation of our arrival. For this, and all the other activities, they always provided the small financial contribution we ask for, well in advance.

The school has an amazing vegetable garden, SFE provided the seeds and some equipment but the children and teachers under the guidance of the VDC did the rest. Now, every school day parents come together and use the vegetables from the garden to cook lunch for all the children.

Next to the school you will see a homemade device to allow the children to wash their hands under running water. Often in the villages they understand the message we teach about washing hands regularly under running water, but it can be very difficult as often they do not have a tap. So instead, everyone washes their hands in a bowl of water, which can quickly become

quite dirty! So, the Eleung school teacher, encouraged by the VDC, ingeniously designed the bamboo gadget to provide running water for the children.

We have no doubt that the Eleung VDC will continue to succeed with the follow-up and monitoring of the planned activities, adding their own ideas and creativity. But most importantly,

with the tools and knowledge we have provided, we know that they will continue to develop their village long after we have left.

So why is this village an exception with a majority of women leading the committee? Well, it stems from the traditions of their ethnic group, the Souay. There is certainly something to be said for women in leadership!

The partnership:

The water and sanitation member of the VDC recently said, “I really like the SFE collaboration with our team. We receive from them a lot of material and knowledge which is very useful to help us develop our village. All the VDC members are happy and motivated to work all together in with SFE and we are very thankful that they have come to our village.”



Creation of the Mental Health Association and the partnership with SFE

Mrs Dr. CHANTHARAVADY

At the beginning of our project, "Improving the lives of people with mental health problems and epilepsy in Vientiane province," we spent time together with SFE to present and discuss our project vision and budget. Eventually we reached a consensus on the objectives, project activities, working conditions and budget for a joint mission. Once the trust was there, SFE accepted us under their "umbrella" so that we could continue our work on community mental health. Since 2021, we have worked closely with SFE, regularly exchanging opinions on the proper implementation of our activities and also on the financial balance sheet. In October 2022, Thomas Nussbaumer co-chaired the annual project management meeting with the Director of the Provincial Health Department in Vientiane. This was a good opportunity to explore the relationship the project has established with partners such as local authorities, health staff and village volunteers, who are key stakeholders in the project.

This project will end soon, around December 2023. It is therefore vital for us to create the non-profit association "Healthy Mind" in order to continue our work in mental health. As a first step, SFE has put us in touch with the leaders of several associations to provide us with the necessary information. Having the support of SFE as a mediator made it much easier for us to communicate with various groups. At present, the application for the creation of our association is underway.

We are looking forward to having our own association for the mental well-being of the community soon. We will also provide support and resources for families with a person with a mental health problem. And when SFE requests support to integrate mental health into its projects, we expect that our association will be there to share our expertise in this field through further partnership.



TerraCare : Partnership of SFE and TCP

Dawn Marie LEWIS



TerraCare is a cooperative program between Service Fraternel d'Entraide (SFE, NGO in Laos) and TerraClear Production (social enterprise in Laos). In Laos more than half of the population of the poor practice open defecation and only half have a handwashing facility with soap. To address this, a unique partnership was built between an NGO and a social enterprise, SFE and TerraClear.

SFE has been carrying out development projects in Laos since 1998, working among the poorest populations to reduce their economic and social vulnerabilities and improve their living conditions. TerraClear has been selling ceramic filters in Laos since 2010. TerraClear's vision has always been to reach all villagers with clean water, but as a business did not have the resources to subsidize the needy.

As part of its community development projects, SFE tried a new approach to promote filters in villages. Instead of buying the filters and redistri-

buting them, SFE worked with TerraClear, with SFE providing subsidy vouchers (funded by donors) and beneficiaries paid the remaining 5 euro contribution (11% of the total price of the filter - 46 euros).

The results were excellent: The poorest families purchased filters in community wide meetings. Needy families purchased, with dignity, a valuable product along with their own financial contribution. SFE and TerraClear extended this approach so in 2020, TerraCare was born. Using subsidized vouchers, funded by donors through SFE France, TerraClear sales staff now reach the poorest of southern Laos with filters in their own homes. Subsidized filters include 6 hygiene trainings per family, with TerraClear representatives effectively promoting hygiene education along with filter sales to the poor.

TerraCare has reached over 9000 families (over 19,000 individuals) with filters and 5 or 6 hygiene trainings. The project has the potential in the near future to be replicated in the neighboring provinces, aiming to help ensure universal and equitable access to safe drinking water at an affordable cost by permanently reducing the consumption of untreated water. SFE and TerraClear are currently seeking funding for a second phase of the project, to start in 2023 Q4.

The partnership between SFE and TCP is a complete success!

Testimonial from Jonathan Ringer, Founder and Director of Technology and Production of TerraClear

TerraCare is a great marriage of good development practices with efficient use of capital and business practice to meet the needs of the Lao people in terms of clean water. SFE development experience together with TerraClear's ability to reach every village in Laos gives this combined effort an effectiveness that neither of us could

reach by ourselves. I have known SFE for years, watching as they used best practices and good development theory as well as a holistic approach to bring clean water to the villages where they worked. When we decided to team our efforts and create TerraCare, we knew we had a winning combination and the people of Laos are the true beneficiaries of this cooperative effort.

Interview with Nathan Inthasone, Director of the B4Lao Centre

B4Lao is a vocational training centre whose objective is to enable young people from ethnic minority groups and disadvantaged families to develop professional skills that will generate income for their families.

1) What is the origin of the partnership with SFE?

B4Lao and SFE have been working together since the creation of the center in 2016. This partnership was born thanks to the long-standing friendly relationship between Dr Prafix Inthasone, founder of B4Lao, and two members of SFE, Silvain Dupertuis and Vanh Kheuanesombath. I myself had worked in a project in Champassak province supported by SFE. Knowing SFE well, it seemed natural to ask them for support in starting up the center.

2) What does this partnership consist of?

SFE participated as an advisor in the strategic development meetings of B4Lao, and also helped us in the coordination with government ministries and with various organizations in Vientiane. SFE supported the implementation of the center's accounting system and continues to provide monitoring and technical support. Two SFE experts assisted in the development of B4Lao's professional training program. In addition, SFE has helped to improve the knowledge and professional skills of B4Lao employees and has hosted B4Lao students as interns in its development projects.

SFE also assists in fundraising by sharing funding opportunities with potential donors. For example, through SFE's assistance we were able to get funding from the French Embassy.

We also hold informal meetings to discuss activities, to find financial sources, or to plan future projects together.

3) What are the future prospects of this partnership?

Further opportunities for collaboration between B4Lao and SFE are possible in the coming years. However, B4Lao is a vocational school registered as a private



company, which makes it impossible to undertake development projects or to receive donations directly from abroad. This requires a different type of structure. So, in parallel to B4Lao, the Aid and Development Foundation (ADF) was created in 2020. SFE provided us with technical assistance in setting up the foundation. The aim of the foundation is to help disadvantaged communities in rural areas to have equal access to education, health, agriculture and social assistance through community development projects.

The foundation is authorized to carry out projects throughout the country and can receive funding from abroad. The B4Lao Training Center has signed a partnership agreement with ADF in order to have access to various funds to develop new learning centers and to obtain scholarships for students from poor families. Through the foundation, we want to set up development projects to have a more direct impact in rural villages.



As we do not have the technical skills in project management and fundraising, we once again approached SFE to benefit from their expertise. The partnership between SFE and the foundation is now formalized through ADF's involvement in SFE project "Better Together: inclusive access to health and rehabilitation services". (see p. 5) which will start in 2023 in the province of Attapeu. In this way, the ADF team will be coached by the SFE team in the implementation of a project and will learn about inclusive community development approaches.

A partnership rooted in a common history

Mikaël AMSING



The partnership between SFE and SME (Service de Mission et d'Entraide: "Service of Mission and Mutual Aid") is special in the sense that the two organizations are very close in terms of identity and values. In 1996, SME co-founded SFE as a fully-fledged organization. The links are therefore very close, even beyond the almost identical acronyms. For SME, one of the strengths of SFE is that it has been uniquely anchored in Laos for many years, and in particular has been able to develop fruitful partnerships and mutual trust with the local authorities in the provinces where it operates. One ongoing task is to capitalize on the experiences in the province of Sekong between SFE and the Provincial Health Directorate in order to highlight the good practices that have allowed this partnership to be successful.

For a partnership to have an impact for the people we serve in Laos, it is crucial that the organizations complement each other without overlapping. This requires clear responsibilities on both sides, mutual flexibility and above all the recognition that the other enriches our work and vice versa. This requires dialogue and transparency, of course, and also strengthening human relations. During my trips, I have really appreciated the richness of the

people I worked with in the projects, whether they were SFE members or Lao staff. Seeing several people who have been involved for a long time and who ensure stability in their knowledge of the country and its functioning is really a richness. It's nice to be able to work in the same direction with a diversity of views and experiences.

In the end, I think we can say that our partnership is fruitful, but it is something that should always be strengthened and regularly evaluated according to some quality criteria, in order to always aim for good equity in the partnership. In my experience, I have sometimes seen unbalanced partnership relationships, whether it be in terms of participation, decision-making capacity or the question of financial flow. Unfortunately, such partnerships are only contractual, transactional, or even neo-colonial, and miss the mark in many ways!

At SME, our goal is to strengthen our partnership dynamics with SFE, and to continue to learn from each other, so that together we can have the greatest possible impact on the people and communities we serve.

A long-term partnership

Thomas STEFFEN

SFE has been in partnership with Coworkers a German cooperation organization (formerly CFI) for many years by receiving experts to be involved in projects in Laos. In most cases, SFE asks Coworkers to suggest potential experts according to the needs of ongoing or future projects. In my case, I was already in contact with SFE, who asked Coworkers to take care of me. I was, from the beginning, impressed by the professionalism, seriousness of our interlocutors at Coworkers and more than convinced about all aspects of the organization.

Starting with a long telephone interview with Matthias

Nagel, the first meeting in Stuttgart, and the Week of Preparation in Frielzheim, I really felt how much Coworkers' managers and staff care about putting into practice their vocation to work for the benefit of the poor populations all over the world, in collaboration with local partners.

At the same time, it is a priority for Coworkers to support, equip and care for the experts sent to various countries. I really feel like part of a family and well cared for by our Project-Manager, Esther Rauen, as well as by the other leaders and all those in the organization who are there to support us.



Esther RAUEN, project manager (Coworkers Professionals)

Writing about the partnership between Coworkers (formerly CFI) and SFE brings the joy of looking back at a fruitful collaboration of more than 20 years. Starting in 2001 and continuing today, we have been able to second a total of ten development workers to support the work of SFE in different projects in Laos – with two more secondments planned for the coming year.

Our desire as Coworkers is to encourage and empower local people to make the most of existing skills and resources in impacting their communities, regions and nations. This can mean training people in health care, helping introduce new agricultural methods, developing educational materials, empowering young people in skilled trades and much more. For this, we are constantly on the lookout for local partner organizations that are based in developing countries

and that run projects relevant to development work.

In some countries it is not easy to find suitable partner organizations. We are therefore all the more grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with SFE in Laos. For us, SFE is a partner organization that has our same “heartbeat”: the same desire to empower local people by working side-by-side with them for sustainable development. Over the years of close collaboration, we have developed a relationship of mutual trust and understanding. We look forward to continuing to serve the people of Laos together with SFE.Q

Esther Rauen worked with SFE from February 2010 to December 2015 and developed the community-based approach to our medical program in Attapeu.

Year 2022 in a few key figures



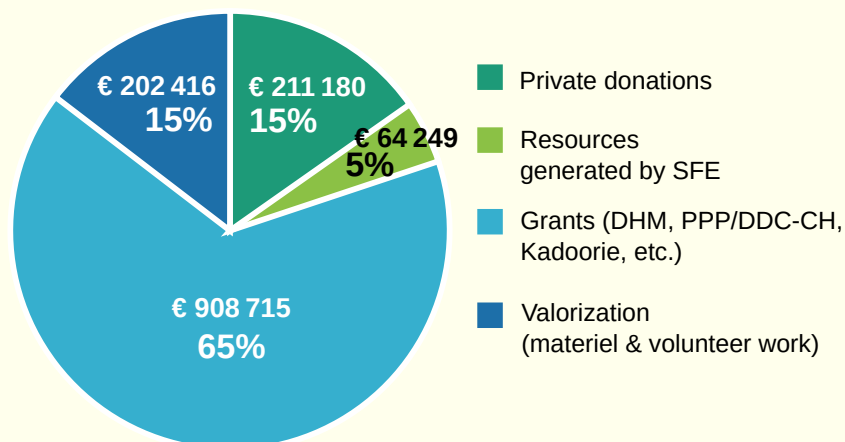
Key figures

Impact of SFE to date



Income 2022

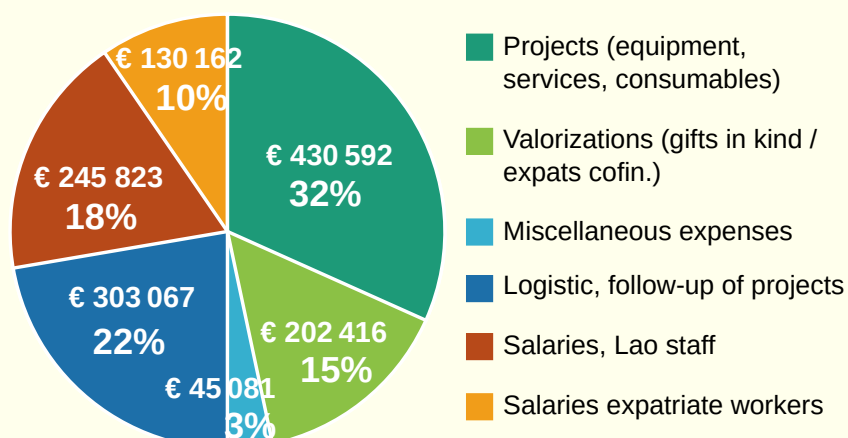
Total : € 1386 560



Financial report

Expenses 2022

Total : € 1 357 141



Donors



Working partners





Alongside Lao People



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