



COPE News

HELPING PEOPLE MOVE ON

Happy Lao New Year/Sok Dii Pi Mai

About COPE

COPE works throughout Lao PDR supporting essential services to people with disabilities. COPE works in partnership with local government services enabling people to receive prosthetic, orthotic and other mobility devices. COPE is also providing an extensive rehabilitation training program.

Our vision is for a high quality, comprehensive rehabilitation service which is locally staffed and free to those who cannot afford to pay. We are working hard to put in place innovative ways of securing funding so that the service will be here long term. Be part of a global network to get us there!

Meet our staff



Sengthong Soukhathammavong
COPE Connect Coordinator

Sengthong was born in Houaphanh Province, which was heavily bombed during the Indochina War, but grew up in Vientiane. Sengthong has a Bachelor of Education and is completing a Masters of Economics at the University of Laos. Before working at COPE, Sengthong was a translator for rural development programmes in northern Lao PDR.

As the outreach coordinator, Sengthong disseminates information about COPE services to people with disabilities at the provincial, district and village level. 'Being born in a province that was heavily bombed, I saw many UXO victims. I always wished that I could do something to help them and I am very happy that I can do this by working with COPE Connect'.

New Funding for COPE Services

COPE has recently received confirmation of three important new sources of funding. These three new sources of funding will help to cover core costs associated with service delivery over the next three years.

The first new source of funding comes from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID is providing COPE with funding for the next three years to improve the quality of orthotic services offered to patients. Funding will cover the costs associated with providing these essential services, including staff and training.



USAID funding will also support the COPE Connect outreach program, be used to develop and refine the patient database system and the development of survey tools.

The second new source of funding comes from the Australian Government Overseas Aid Program (AusAID). AusAID is providing funding for the next three years to cover costs associated with the delivery of essential COPE services.



Funding from AusAID will also be used to refurbish and update the P&O workshop and office facilities, both of which are in bad need of repair.

The third new source of funding is from the Government of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The Government of Norway are providing funding to refurbish the P&O workshop and COPE office facilities.

Plans are currently underway to construct a second storey to the building which houses the COPE office and P&O workshop rooms. As part of these refurbishments work will be undertaken to replace the outdated electrical fittings in these premises.

These new sources of funding will ensure that our services reach a greater number of recipients, improve the quality of service delivery, create better records and reporting mechanisms, improve the capacity of COPE to gain feedback from service recipients and improve the quality of the workplace environment.

We would like to thank these donors for their commitment to improving the quality of the services delivered to the people with disabilities in Lao PDR.

Patient Story - Alounyadeth

Alounyadeth is 23 years old, is married and has a young daughter. In December 2010, whilst training to become a mechanic in China, he fell and suffered a large blow to his head causing a severe brain injury. He underwent many operations, one of which removed part of his skull to reduce the pressure and amount of damage to his brain.

When he came to the National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) on 24th of February this year, he was unable to move his body and had difficulty communicating to his family. He is being seen 2 times a day by the physiotherapy (PT) staff, who are helping him retrain the movement in his body and

assist him in to sitting positions where he can interact better with his family.

Two of our COPE volunteers, a physiotherapist and orthotist have been supporting the local staff to help train them in treating complex patients, such as Alounyadeth.



Alounyadeth will continue to receive rehabilitation at the NRC for many months to come, but has already made great improvements. He is now able to move his arms and legs a little and has enough strength to sit in a wheelchair for part of the day. He can communicate better with his family and is more alert in treatment sessions.

Communication and Advocacy Training

Thanks to funding provided by the French Embassy's Social Development Fund, COPE has begun running a series of professional development activities to develop the communication and advocacy skills of Lao national staff in 2011.

The first of these activities aims to build the communication and advocacy skills of the staff at the COPE Visitor Centre to help them to better manage and implement Visitor Centre activities.

Staff at the Visitor Centre have been involved in a range of activities to learn how to improve the management and running of the Visitor Centre. This has included participation in sessions where staff have been involved in developing a strategic plan covering various aspects of the Visitor Centre's operations.

As part of this staff have undertaken an exhaustive review of the various aspects of the Visitor Centre, analyzing the quality and efficacy of the exhibition, gift shop and cafe.

The second activity aims to build the communication and advocacy skills of Lao National staff from local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) so that they can continue to advocate for the adoption and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

Lao national staff from local NGOs have been invited to participate in a series of 7 full day workshops covering various aspects of communication and advocacy. This includes workshops on strategic planning, resource mobilization, event planning, media, report writing and public speaking.

The workshop training will culminate in the group organizing a campaign event to promote the CCM, which will coincide with the anniversary of the CCM's entry into force on the 1st of August.



T-Shirt Design Competition

Do you have design skills? Ever wanted to have your design skills splashed all over a T-shirt? Well this is the competition for you!

COPE is looking for a funky new design to complement its range of T-shirt, which are sold through the Visitor Centre to raise funds for COPE. We are putting out a call to budding and experienced designers and artists alike to come up with a new T-shirt design. The design must be relevant to the work of COPE whilst also looking great. We want designs that have unisex appeal that can be printed

on a range of T-shirt colors.

If you think you are up to the task then send an e-mail to copevisitorcentre@gmail.com to register and we will send you some more information.

PT, OT & P&O Update

Physiotherapy (PT) staff have just completed a 5 day course covering assessment of neurological patients and participated in a national PT conference on the 14th March. A new physiotherapy assistant (Bounma) recently started working with the PT Mentor. A volunteer from Australia (Julia) has been helping in the Neurological Department for the past three weeks.

Occupational Therapy (OT) staff have recently completed the delivery of a 5 day training course with 16 staff from the NRC/PRC. At this training staff learnt about the new assessment form that has just been completed and how to use the form to accurately record patient details. Construction of the new children's playground and development area is currently underway.

Prosthetic & Orthotic (P&O) staff will be conducting bench technician training with 3 new staff covering prosthetic and orthotic production and will meet with International Committee of the Red Cross Special Fund for the Disabled (ICRC-SFD) staff to coordinate the audit of prosthetic device quality in March/April. ICRC-SFC staff will also conduct training with NRC staff at this time.

Vientiane College Students Visit COPE

On Friday 4th March, 60 students from Vientiane College came to the Visitor Centre to learn about the work of COPE and learn about the cluster munitions issue. The students are currently studying to improve their English language skills in the hope of being able to travel to Australia and New Zealand to study as part of the AusAID scholarship program. Students toured the exhibition, watched the Bomb Harvest documentary and then spoke with Phongsavath, a bomb survivor. Phongsavath spoke to the student's about his life, his accident, his treatment at COPE and his dreams for the future.



Raising Funds for COPE

After visiting COPE in July last year, Nadine Yazbek went home to Australia and organized a beach boot camp with her friend Hayden O'Halloran to raise money for COPE. Participants went through a gruelling program of fitness activities coordinated by Hayden at Henley Beach in Adelaide. In doing so Nadine raised 1000AUD to support COPE. Thanks to Nadine, Hayden and all of the participants who sweated happily for a great cause.

