



COPE

Newsletter

August 2013

Latest news

"40 Years far too long"

We are running a campaign called *40 years far too long* which refers to the time that Laos has held its status as the most heavily bombed country in the world per capita and the 40 years that Laos has continued to suffer from the detrimental impacts of

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO).

We have created an online forum for people to share their messages of peace and speak out

against the use of cluster munitions worldwide. Please join us in sharing information about UXO in Laos, and advocating for a ban on cluster munitions.

More information is available at http://www.copelaos.org/campaign_2013_ababo.php

The Oslo Convention became international law on August 1, 2010. Laos is one of 112 countries have joined the Convention and 83 are States Parties.

On the 1st of August 2013 COPE joined the football tournament with teams from international



organizations and government departments in Vientiane. It marked the third anniversary of the Entry into Force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

On the 3rd of August 2013, there was an official celebration at Culture Hall. We set up our COPE booth and distributed the information about COPE to local people especially young students from the University of Laos so they can learn more about cluster munitions effecting and disabilities in Laos.



COPE is...

The Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise. We are a local not for profit organisation that provides support to the Government of Laos' orthotic, prosthetic, and rehabilitation services throughout the country. In addition, COPE advocates for survivors of bomb accidents and people with disabilities in Laos.

FAST FACTS

35%

Of our COPE patients who fitted with the prosthetic are from bomb accidents.

3751

Visits to the Visitor Centre across the second quarter of 2013! It's lower from last quarter due to raining season.

In this edition

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- ✓ Meet patient Buasi
- ✓ Message from our FUNdraisers
- ✓ Visitor Center Update
- ✓ COPE staff changes

COPE Services

COPE Paediatric

From May to July 2013, the paediatric department has been home to a fortnightly support group for parents of a child with cerebral palsy. The 6 sessions have been facilitated by CMR and COPE staff with a total of 12 families attending the group.

The group was set up to enable families with a child with a disability to meet others in a similar situation and to share their experiences. It also provided an opportunity to give families information on key areas of interest including equipment, preparing for school and exercises to complete with their child at home. COPE's Government of Lao Partner, the Center of Medical Rehabilitation (CMR), asked their paediatric team to be involved in preparation and completion of different sessions. Overall there was a great deal of satisfaction expressed by the parents who were able to meet other parents who are facing similar challenges with caring for their children.



COPE Connect

COPE Connect is an initiative to spread the word and inform people of the physical rehabilitation services available and to support them to access care through the Government of Lao's Rehabilitation Centers located throughout the country.



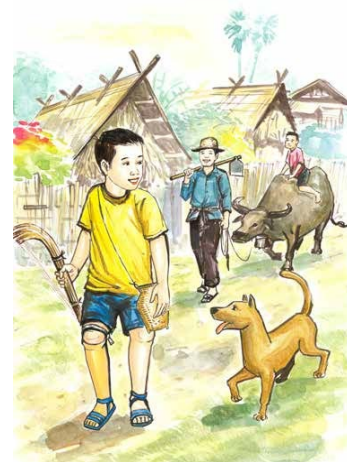
COPE Connect works to establish referral networks with provincial health departments, district health offices, district hospitals, village and community health workers. So far we have created referral and networking systems in 10 provinces and more than 500 key government staff had been trained and informed about the services. These key staff will play the important roles in spreading and informing the people who need the services in their communities, helping and encouraging them to access to the services provided.

In the second quarter of 2013, COPE Connect organized the introductory work shop to set up the network referral system in Sayabouly province. There were 38 participants from provincial health department, provincial and district health offices, district hospitals, village and community health workers attending the work shop. COPE Connect will also train people to identify different disabilities and physical problems. The aim of

the network is to identify people who need physical rehabilitation or mobility devices and refer them to COPE-supported GOL Rehabilitation Centers for assessment.

Clinical patient assessments were conducted in two districts in order to screen patients that were identified by local referees. 103 people were assessed, 50 percent of them were given referral letters and invited to the services at Center of Medical Rehabilitation in Vientiane and Provincial rehabilitation centers.

COPE has developed a number of education materials to help explain to people what kind of services are available and what kind of help they can expect from COPE. These include posters that outline what kind of disabilities can be treated at the centers and a comic book that outlines the process that patients go through - from the assessment, to travel to the rehabilitation centers, to treatment. It clarifies what costs COPE will cover (transport, food, accommodation, production costs). COPE has also put advertisements on the radio to raise awareness and increase the demand of services.



Patient story: Buasi

We met Buasi after she was fitted with her new prosthetic in July 2013. Buasi is a 20 year old student. She lives in Meun District, Vientiane Province.



Can you tell us your story?

I was born with one of my legs missing and when I was younger I learned how to walk by using crutches for support. It was very difficult for me to move around, especially going to school. I could not do things and play like other children. I was very quiet and did not have many friends.

Luckily, my parents heard about COPE services in 2007 from my district hospital and I fitted with my first prosthetic then.

Every year I have to come back to get a new prosthetic because I am still growing and my new leg does not fit after a year.

What are the differences you experienced after being fitted with the prosthetic?

Before being fitted with the prosthetic I faced with so many difficulties in term of mobility. After I have been fitted with the prosthetic, I can walk freely and I can participate in school activities like normal people.

The future for Buasi

This year is my final year at the high school, after I graduate would like to study at the University of Laos and want to have a good job then.

I am very happy, and thankful that I am able to walk like others. I want to say thanks to COPE for the support that I was given.



Buasi was fitted with her 6th prosthetic at the rehabilitation centre in Vientiane

COPE FUNRAISERS

A message from St John's Anglican College in Brisbane, Australia.

In the recent school holidays 11 students and 2 staff members from St John's Anglican College in Brisbane, Australia travelled to Northern Thailand and Laos. The school is a co-educational private school with a student enrolment of 1000 students.

We left behind the comforts of home and embarked in a journey of a life time. One of the main features of the trip was the community project, as well as leadership and personal development. Our community project was in the Seung River Valley, which is a two hour drive from Luang Prabang. The project that the team completed was installing ceilings and painting a double classroom at an infant school.

We had some fundraising money left so while we were in Vientiane we visited the COPE Centre to donate approximately \$1,200.00. The team had read that there are still approximately 90 land mine victims per year in Laos. The students that we had travelling with us were very touched by this statistic and they were determined that we would make time in our itinerary to visit the COPE centre. We were glad to have been able to assist in this way.



Thanks so much! It's thanks to donations from people like you that COPE can help patients, including Buasi, featured here

What's going on at the Visitor Centre?

Special guests galore!



The second quarter of 2013 has gone by very quickly and in that time we were pleased to welcome a number of special guests and visitors to the centre including:

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Strategy and Multilateral Affairs Michael Fuchs (photo above) recently visited Laos for the first time. While in Vientiane, he met with Lao government officials, officials from the Mekong River Commission, spoke with members of civil society about development in Laos, and took a tour of Cope Center.



Alexandra Bounxouei, UNDP Goodwill Ambassador. Her role is to advocate and speak about UN messages and themes.

In particular she will focus on UXO related topics, such as survivor assistance and mine risk education to draw more attention to the issue and she will also focus on environment and poverty reduction issues. Thanks for visiting COPE!

Connect with us



Many thanks to our supporters...



And special thanks to all the individuals, visitors and local businesses who generously support us throughout the year!

COPE STAFF

Zarese Kisielewski volunteered through the Australian Youth Ambassador for Development program at the COPE Visitor Centre for a year, starting in July 2012. Her role was to support the Visitor Centre team in developing communications, marketing, fundraising and advocacy capabilities. Through this program we have seen a significant development of the services provided by those trained. She also helped organize the famous COPE concert in 2012. She also launched the 40 Years Too Long campaign.



Zarese, thank you for your dedication to improving the skills of COPE's staff and the services at the COPE Visitor Centre. Although we are sad to see you leave Lao PDR we wish you all the best in your future work. We will miss you!

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