



COPE Newsletter December 2013

Latest news

Revamp of the Visitor Centre

COPE's Visitor Centre was set up in 2008 and could this year celebrate its fifth anniversary. Over the last few years the number of visitors has increased significantly. Last year, 17,000 people visited and the Centre remains the most popular tourist



attraction in Vientiane according to Trip Advisor. The Visitor Centre is very important for the national rehabilitation efforts, both in its income-generating role and in terms of raising awareness of the impact of cluster munitions and other UXO and the long terms needs and challenges for the rehabilitation sector. For the first time since the Visitor Centre was opened it has now been revamped thanks to support from the Norwegian government and others. The

changes will make the exhibition more informative and up to date. The revamp has been led by the person who originally helped set the Visitor Centre up, Jo Pereira. Jo, thanks for your great dedication and support!

Looking for a unique Christmas present?

Buy a leg for a bomb survivor or a toy for a child with a disability, on behalf of another person. You can make a difference. A valuable donation to COPE and a unique Christmas present. The donation Christmas cards were designed by Colin Cotterill, the famous author and cartoonist, in five different designs. Thank you Colin for designing these awesome cards for COPE free of charge! Buy your Christmas card in the COPE Visitor Centre or online as a digital card on www.copelaos.org.



Leg card US\$75, toy card US\$20

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 other people with disabilities in Laos.

FAST FACTS



35%

Of the patients who are fitted with prosthetics are from bomb accidents.



5876

Visits to the Visitor Centre during the third quarter of 2013!

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P&O update

Towards quality rehabilitation services in Laos

How do we ensure the necessary quality of the physical rehabilitation services for people with disabilities across Laos? This was one of the key questions during a Quality Control Management seminar which took place at the Centre of Medical Rehabilitation (CMR) in November.

The seminar was organized by COPE together with CMR, supported by USAID and the ICRC-Special Fund for the Disabled. Participants included 40 people involved in CMR prosthetic and orthotic services across the country, and was facilitated by experts from India and Vietnam.

During the four day seminar, which was opened by the Minister of Health, challenges were identified and a plan for the future agreed upon. A CMR Quality Control Task Team was set up, and will be responsible for evaluating and auditing the implementation of quality control procedures and policies in CMR's five physical rehabilitation centres in Laos.



Opening ceremony

Teaching how to walk on new legs



In November, COPE and CMR held a Gait Training Course sponsored by USAID to upgrade and revitalize the prosthetic gait training patients throughout the country receive.

Participants from both the fields of prosthetics & orthotics (P&O) and physical therapy took part in the training which was held at CMR in Vientiane. The course was seen as very useful by both participants and trainers. Follow-up sessions will be organized according to needs in 2014.

Patient story: Thongvanh

We met Thongvanh after he was fitted with his new prosthesis in November 2013. Mr Thongvanh is a 62 year old farmer living in Laongam District, Salavanh Province.

Can you tell us your story?

I was injured by a landmine whilst working on my farm in 1968. Mr Thongvanh's province, which was once part of Ho Chi Min trail, is

one of the most heavily bombed areas in Laos PDR.

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

Before being fitted with the prosthesis I faced with so many difficulties in term of mobility. After I have been fitted with the prosthetic



Mr Thongvanh received his fourth prosthesis from CMR in Vientiane

device, I can walk freely and I can do some work and participate in social activities like normal people. I am very thankful for the kind support that I have been given. Now I can move around in comfort and can participate effectively in a normal life. I am very happy that I can work on my farm again and it is very important for me that I do not need any help from others in terms of my mobility.

Presently, Thongvanh spends most of his time growing vegetables and feeding livestock, including ducks, chickens and cows.

COPE FUNdraisers

Spare Parts brings together a diverse range of artists who each use “pre-loved” prosthetics as their canvas. Curator of this exhibition, Australian amputee, Priscilla Sutton, started working on a fun creative project back in 2010 to recycle her own old prosthetic legs she had tucked away in the cupboard. After encouragement from friends Priscilla decided to expand the idea, and started to collect arms and legs from all over Australia, America and also from Laos, giving them to a diverse range of artists to use as their canvas. The result was a very popular exhibition at the Brisbane Powerhouse that year, followed by another successful exhibition in London during the 2012 Paralympics.



In early 2013 Priscilla decided to clean out her garage and put all of the donations still remaining to good use. She decided to raise money for COPE, and put together another exhibition.

Spare Parts aims not only to recycle used, or “pre-loved”, arms and legs into new and exciting artworks but also to celebrate prosthetics and how much can be achieved by using them.

The exhibition sold out in the first day, with prosthetic legs turned into artwork being bought by people all over Australia and the USA.

Priscilla's next project is about prosthetic eyes! And we can't wait to see what that is all about.



**Thanks so much!
It's thanks to
donations from
people like you that
we can help
patients.**

Giving time

Alonda, 16, is an 11th grader from Putney School in Putney, Vermont, USA. Below are some thoughts from her time volunteering with COPE earlier this year:

“I have been visiting COPE ever since I was very young. The more I visited COPE the more I wanted to be a part of what COPE does. This summer I decided to volunteer at the Visitor Centre because I was going to be home for three months, so I decided to donate a month out of my summer to work at COPE. I wanted to work at COPE and come back to Putney and share my experience with everyone here and make them aware. I think it's good for this generation to be aware of what's happening around the world and how peoples' lives are effected everyday by an event that a lot of people may have forgotten about. I know that some of my friends in America have no idea that the bombs dropped years ago during the Vietnam War are still affecting peoples' lives every single day.”



What's going on at the Visitor Centre?

Special guests galore!

The last 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:



Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird visited Laos in October. While he was in Vientiane, he met with Laos' president and Lao government officials. As part of his visit he also came to the COPE Visitor Centre. He took a tour of COPE and CMR to learn more about the UXO problem in Laos and the work done to ensure physical rehabilitation of victims and other people with disabilities.

The Canadian government has so far provided aid for UXO clearance operations and related activities in Laos worth more than US\$ 2.1 million.

COPE staff

Welcome and goodbye



Sengdeuane Inthilad (Ning) just graduated with a Master of Management, majoring in Human Resource Management, from Trisakti University in Indonesia. He started working with the COPE team in September as Office Coordinator. "I want to be part of social work and help other people and think COPE is a good project that supports disabled people in Laos," said Ning.

Two other staff members finished their contracts recently, Sherri Wiebe and Temali Boyle. Thank you Sherri and Temali!

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Many thanks to our supporters...



Australian Government
AusAID



ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

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