



COPE News

HELPING PEOPLE MOVE ON

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



Ms. Donna Koolmees joined the COPE team in March 2010 as the Paediatric Occupational Therapy (OT) Mentor, coming with 16 years of OT experience. She has worked in outreach, community based rehabilitation and special education services in Zambia, Jamaica, Indonesia and Lao PDR. Outside of work, Donna is kept busy with her husband and two young children who are enjoying exploring Lao. She is also currently studying a Masters in Health Research and Disability Studies.

"It's great to join the COPE team," Donna commented. "There is great potential to increase the role of OT within the rehabilitation teams so persons with disabilities can remain active in the community, and fully participate in day to day activities despite their physical impairments."

Occupational Therapy at COPE



COPE has begun to support the development of Occupational Therapy (OT) at the National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) with the arrival of the new paediatric Occupational Therapy Mentor, Ms. Donna Koolmees. This is a great addition to the work of COPE and the NRC, to be able to provide this important component of rehabilitation for children with disabilities. OT focuses on assisting persons with disability to re-gain independence following injury or impairment so they can continue to engage in the jobs of everyday life.

OT is a relatively unknown profession in Lao PDR with no local training program available. Donna is working with five physiotherapists to develop their OT skills, including two staff from the adult team and three staff from the paediatric team. Training will cover a wide range of issues including vocational rehabilitation, provision of assistive devices made from local materials, hand therapy and upper limb orthoses, and play as a therapeutic tool.

Are you a physio or OT?

Are you an occupational therapist or physiotherapist interested in helping COPE's mentoring programs? Can you offer help from a distance either by developing training materials, sourcing equipment/materials, or visiting Lao PDR for an international work experience? For more information contact us!

Calling Carpenters and Engineers

The OT clinic areas need to be equipped with new resources, all of which will be made locally where possible. So if you are a carpenter or engineer who is willingly to help in design and construct paediatric rehabilitation equipment from locally made materials, we need to hear from you! Our equipment needs to be simple in design, produced at a low cost whilst providing the functional components and adjustability to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Working again

Ladsamy has recently been able to return to work after a devastating traffic accident that resulted in her losing one of her legs. In May, she received a prosthetic leg with the assistance of COPE. "This new prosthesis is very important to me", 20 year old Ladsamy said. "It means I can now walk around with confidence again and return to work as a teacher."

In early January this year, Ladsamy was driving home from work on her motorbike. At a curve in the road, a truck driving too fast tried to overtake her. As the truck passed her on the bend, a large container that was sitting on the back of it fell off. As it fell the container pushed Ladsamy off her motorbike and landed on her leg, crushing it. "After the accident I had to use crutches and moving around was difficult and slow. Now I can walk again!"



VIP takes a tour of COPE



All visitors to the COPE Visitor Centre are important but some come with their own bodyguards! The last of who was His Royal Highness Mired Bin Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan. The Prince, who is the Vice President of the Jordan Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities, said he was very moved by the tour of the Centre and impressed by the work COPE does to help people with disabilities. He encouraged all the COPE staff to continue their work and spoke of the motivation he receives from seeing people with disabilities moving on with their lives.

Prince Mired was in Vientiane in April to meet with the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss Lao PDR joining the international treaty that bans antipersonnel mines. For more information on this treaty visit www.icbl.org.

Banning Cluster Munitions... in Chile

In June, two COPE staff members were sponsored to attend the Global Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Santiago, Chile as part of the civil society delegation working to ban the weapon. The Conference was attended by government representatives from over 90 countries, United Nations representatives and over 120 Cluster Munition Coalition members (the later of which COPE is a part of). They discussed the implementation of the treaty that bans cluster munitions.

Following the conference, a four-day civil society training was facilitated by the Cluster Munition Coalition. The workshop provided a unique opportunity to learn from people from all over the globe who are doing similar work to COPE Team. "The people who are a part of the Cluster Munitions Coalition have an incredible amount of experience and knowledge. It was a privilege to work with them and learn from them at the workshop", the COPE Marketing and Events Coordinator, Nam said, after the conference. "I am very happy and grateful for the opportunity to go and I look forward to hosting the CMC when they come in Lao in November." The Lao Government will host an international government meeting on the Convention in November in Vientiane.

For more information on the ban on cluster munitions or the Cluster Munition Coalition visit www.stopclustermunitions.org.

"Can't blame a man for trying" Competition!

COPE is looking for photographs of English translations on signs or t-shirts that just make you laugh. The top 12 photos will be printed in our 2011 calendar. Those whose photos are chosen will be posted copies of the COPE Calendar. Please note we will only accept photos you have taken yourself. So have your camera poised and ready.

Send all entries with a caption and where the photo was taken to copenvisitorcentre@gmail.com by 20th August.

All entries will be posted on copelaos.blogspot.com for your enjoyment!



Did you hear from us in March?

Due to technical difficulties it appears not all our supporters received the last COPE News, emailed out in March. If you are one, we are very sorry! Please email us if you would like to receive a copy of March COPE News - albeit a couple of months late.

Save the Date

Karma 4 Kids Day will be on Saturday 4th September. Keep the date free in your diaries and more information to follow!

New Dr. Siri out now

'Love Songs from the Grave', Colin Cotterill's latest addition to the Dr. Siri series, is now out and available at the COPE Visitor Centre.

Mo-vember update

The Australian Embassy in Lao PDR staff that hid their razors for the month of November last year raised \$660usd for the COPE project. Thanks guys for your fine effort and we look forward to the moustaches returning this November.

Auction for COPE

A spirited auction and luncheon organized in May in support of COPE raised over \$4300USD. The luncheon was attended by over 80 guests who bid on items donated by friends of the Il Vicolo Restaurant, including creative prizes and bidding that saw "4 dozen virgin white toilet rolls" go for \$100!

Thank you to Wendy Coates and the team at IL Vicolo Restaurant in Melbourne, Australia for your amazing fundraising effort!

