



# COPE News

HELPING PEOPLE MOVE ON

*Visitor Centre Special*

## 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!

## COPE Visitor Centre re-opened after renovations

The Visitor Centre was flooded on 31 July after continuous heavy rainfall. This was not the first time. To prevent further flooding and damage, we were building a new elevated floor, and were fixing and reinforcing the ceiling.



**The Visitor Centre re-opened this week. We are looking forward to welcoming you again!**

Thank you to the Australia Government's overseas aid program (AusAID) for their continuing support in the Visitor Centre, providing the funding to stop our centre from continually flooding.

During this time, the Visitor Centre team has taken the opportunity to benefit from in-depths trainings. One part of it was to learn more about COPE services by spending some

days with our teams in Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Orthotics departments.

In addition they have taken part in an educational field trip to Huaphan and Xieng Khouang provinces - one of the most heavily bombed areas in Laos - to visit affected communities and UXO clearance sites to learn more about the UXO issues in Laos. This knowledge can be transferred to visitors at the COPE Visitor Centre making our tours better than ever.



The team wishes to thank the French Fund for Social Development who funded the field trip, enabling them to see the impacts of UXO first hand. Also, thank you to the Mine Advisory Group (MAG) team and UXO Lao team for showing us their inspiring work.

## Meet our staff



**Ilona Fricker**  
COPE Physiotherapy Mentor

Ilona is a British physiotherapist who has worked with COPE since July 2009. Prior to this she spent time working in Uganda and Indonesia.

"I work with physiotherapist trainers from Vientiane and the 4 provincial rehabilitation centres. My role is to upgrade their knowledge and skills in a range of areas of physiotherapy. This week I'm running a course on Lumbar spine pain.

It's fascinating and challenging work that is very rewarding when you see your teaching put into practice and the patients benefiting."

## Welcome new COPE staff

Ms. Saysavath Rasasack (Zai) is our new Public Relations Officer in the Visitor Centre. She has extensive working experience with a number of organizations and government departments. She took over the role of Mr. Soksai who found a new challenge within COPE and is now working as Orthotic Assistant.

Mr. Intha Phanouvong joined us in the new position of National Project Officer. He is working to support numerous projects across the work of our organization and has a comprehensive background from various organizations.

## Growing number of visitors

The COPE Visitor Centre sees a steady grow of visitors. The number of people coming to see the exhibition doubled last month of August, compared to the same month last year. From January until August 2011 we welcomed some 5500 visitors, which is 1000 more than in the previous year.

The peak season is yet to come, we are ready!

## COPE concert coming up!

The famous yearly COPE concert with a variety of bands performing is coming up again, this year on Saturday **10 December**. Save the date!

More information will be published on our website closer to date.

## Fundraising in Germany

Gille Chorbacher was raising USD 2100 for COPE during a birthday party with her family and friends.

Her daughter Teresa used to work in the National Rehabilitation Centre in Vientiane as a Volunteer, teaching English. When Gille Chorbacher came from Germany to visit her daughter in Laos, she got to know COPE, got inspired and wanted to support us.

Thank you Gille Chorbacher and all the supporters at the birthday party!



## Adieu Bombie Cup: Congratulations to the winning team!

The "Adieu Bombie Cup" took place on 6 August, after we had to postpone it from the planned date on 31 July due to flooding at the stadium. It was a football tournament to mark the first anniversary of the Entry into Force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, with teams from NGOs, international organizations, government departments and foreign embassies in Vientiane.

COPE and National Regulatory Authority (NRA) teams proceeded into the final, with NRA being the proud winner and owner of the Adieu Bombie Cup Trophy. Congratulations to NRA!



To mark the first anniversary of the Entry into Force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, sports events in more than 50 countries were taking place, symbolizing the global team of countries that have joined the treaty to ban cluster bombs.

A total of 109 countries are now on board the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The entry into force of the Convention started the clock ticking for states worldwide to destroy their cluster munition stockpiles, clear contaminated land and meet the needs of cluster munition survivors.

More than 589,000 cluster bombs containing more than 64 million explosive submunitions have now been destroyed all over the world thanks to the Convention, with eleven countries having already completed destruction of their stockpiles.

The Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC) is now counting down to the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions to be held in Beirut, Lebanon from 12-16 September. The First Meeting of States Parties took place in Vientiane in November 2010.

You can find the photos of the Adieu Bombie Cup on our *facebook* page or on *Picasa*.

More information on the Convention on Cluster Munitions with an updated list of countries that have joined the treaty to ban cluster bombs: [www.stopclustermunitions.org](http://www.stopclustermunitions.org)

## Rehabilitation Trainings for treatment of spinal patients

As part of the 2011 plan to improve management of spinal patients at the National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC), in August this year a 5 day course was organised for Physiotherapy Trainers and Doctors from the NRC and from the provincial centres.

The course on Lumbar Spine Pain looked at both assessment and treatment options for this group of patients. Everybody enjoyed the course especially the practical parts! The next task will be evaluating the trainers practice to ensure they are using their new skills confidently.

Training in Spinal Orthotics was another part of the 2011 plan to improve management of spinal patients.

During August this year, COPE ran a two week training program in Spinal Orthotics for Prosthetists/Orthotists (PO) from Pakse and Savannakhet as well as from Vientiane.



These PO staff are internationally trained and as part of being health professionals they need to constantly update and improve their skills.

Training for Spinal Orthotics was seen as relevant as there are many patients in Laos with spinal problems such as fractures, due to road accidents and falls, or spondylolisthesis who require spinal orthotic treatment.

Casting techniques for different kinds of spinal braces were introduced, including types of braces never used before in Laos. Also, developing research skills for participants was seen as a key element in continuing to provide high quality services to patients.

This is part of an ongoing training program provided by COPE to support the development of P&O services in Laos.

