

# ANNUAL REPORT

2015 - 2016

ChildFund Laos is the representative office of ChildFund Australia – an independent and non-religious international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in the developing world.

ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 11 organisations which assists more than 14 million children and families in 63 countries.

ChildFund Australia is a registered charity and is fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which manages the Australian Government's overseas aid program.

ChildFund began work in Laos in 2010, implementing community development programs in Xieng Khouang Province, one of the poorest areas in the country. ChildFund has a strong focus on improving access to quality education, and is expanding its work to include pre-primary education to ensure that children get the best possible start in life.

In partnership with communities, ChildFund has also established projects to improve water, sanitation and hygiene, mother and child health, food security and nutrition, and to provide opportunities for children and youth to participate in local decision-making. ChildFund has a strong focus on protection, child rights, and developing life-skills through tools including sport and multimedia.

ChildFund Laos has recently begun work in the capital city of Vientiane, in response to the increasing risks facing children in urban areas.

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**Front cover:** Pong, age 10, Laos



The year 2016 was particularly important for ChildFund Laos. Whilst recognising the accomplishments of ChildFund Laos' Country Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015, it also marked the first year of our next five-year Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020.

This year also marked the first year Laos adopted indicators for the Global Goals for Sustainable Development proposed for Lao PDR, whilst also addressing some of the unattained Millennium Development Goals.

In Nonghet, where ChildFund Laos has operated for over seven years, there has been progress in improving access to education for children. By focusing on quality education, including the establishment of Early Childhood Education programs in areas where they have not been previously available, young children can start their learning and development sooner.

We have also extended our reach and diversified our approaches. ChildFund Laos concluded the year by focusing on geographically expanding our programs to four districts in Xieng Khouang and Huaphanh Provinces, resulting in ChildFund being able to support more remote and vulnerable groups in northern Laos. ChildFund Laos' new education program also extended to 57 schools, contributing to the total reach of 94 schools and communities in three provinces by the end of FY 2015 – 2016.

The proportion of people with access to improved water and sanitation has been increasing, yet child health, particularly around hygiene practices, remains a focus issue. Health improvement work in Nonghet, including nutrition, remains vital, particularly in preparation for upcoming cold weather – which can cause illness within families and damage the crops of many.

Increasing student retention rates in schools, children's engagement in development, as well as reducing early marriage as a tactic of girls' empowerment, continue to be key areas of attention. ChildFund's Pass It Back program in Laos continues to enhance gender equality and girls' leadership skills in Nonghet communities, and schools in Vientiane. This year, the program has successfully trained more coaches through camps – which have been centered on tag rugby, life skills, first aid, and child safeguarding.



ChildFund Laos' new programs – Enhanced Education, Enact Protection, Empowered Young and Equitable Wellbeing – all aim to improve our work by leveraging our strengths, while also continuing to support innovative approaches and tools. Child participation and safeguarding also continue to be mainstreamed in a number of our child participation projects in schools and communities, raising awareness on children's rights and increasing child leadership through child club and youth ambassador initiatives.

To achieve our objectives over the next five years, we will continue working with local and international partners, focusing on children's best interests, protection and empowerment. We are truly proud of the progress that has been made for children in the areas where ChildFund works, and thank you for your support this year.

Yours sincerely,

**Keoamphone Souvannaphoum**  
Country Director  
ChildFund Laos

## I AM HEARD PASSING IT BACK

IN NORTHERN LAOS, children and youth are taking up a unique opportunity to learn valuable life skills and make their mark on the world through ChildFund's Pass It Back program. This innovative sport for development program, which uses rugby as a tool for engagement and learning, promotes the right to play in regions where children have little access to organised recreation, and also has a strong focus on leadership, financial literacy and gender equality. The program has attracted equal numbers of girls and boys as both players and coaches.

Pass It Back reached its first milestone in July 2015, when more than 50 youth from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia came together in Vientiane to be trained as coaches. Twenty three of these coaches were from Xieng Khouang Province in northern Laos.

"I'm very happy that I've had the great opportunity to be a Pass It Back coach," says 15-year-old Yur. "I want to be a role model and coach children who've signed-up for rugby, and support them to become good players," she adds.



## I AM SAFE REDUCING RISK

NONGHET DISTRICT is one of Laos' most mountainous regions, with children and families facing a range of extreme weather events every year – severe hail, wind storms, and floods. Not only does this put lives at risk during the event, it can have a devastating impact over the long-term – causing homelessness, devastation to crops and livestock, and food shortages.

To help children and their families prepare for and respond to natural disasters, ChildFund Laos has run consecutive training sessions, both in communities and schools, on conducting emergency drills, establishing first aid areas and working collaboratively to an agreed plan, to mitigate risks and reduce loss of life and destruction of property.

Nine-year-old Palay, who recently exercised her new disaster management skills by taking part in a re-enactment of a terrible flood that struck her village in 2012, says: "I have gained a lot of useful knowledge and can share it with other people who did not attend the training, so they too can prepare themselves for a disaster. I explain to my friends that our village is located in an area which is risky, so we must all be careful and be ready at any time."



## I HAVE A FUTURE

### THE FOG CATCHER

CATCHING FOG could soon solve one of the most serious problems for villages in Nonghet – limited access to water in the dry seasons. Thanks to an online collaboration between Global Community Youth Ambassadors, ChildFund supporters, and French organisation Electriciens sans frontières, an innovative technique of converting fog from the sky into safe drinking water has been developed.

Following online discussions, a consultant from Electriciens sans frontières visited Nonghet to teach Youth Ambassadors how to design and install a Fog Water Trap. Four prototypes built of mesh and wood were eventually set up in Paka village as a pilot, and, remarkably, on the first night the Fog Water Traps collected over 50 litres of pure fog water.

ChildFund Laos is now working with Youth Ambassadors in Nonghet to see how these prototypes can be scaled up to provide water for other areas where water is scarce.



## I AM EDUCATED

### OPPORTUNITIES WITH ENGLISH

AS PART OF ChildFund Laos' Global Community Program, Youth Ambassadors have been given the opportunity to learn English in their villages. In addition to receiving training on digital media and communications, learning the English language is helping youth diversify their skills and improve their confidence and employability.

"It is good for my future if I can speak English because it will be easier to find a job. It's important because English is an international language. My dream is to work in a bank, so English will be very useful," says 15-year-old Noy.

The English lessons are run twice a week by ChildFund Laos' Child Participation and Research Officer, who is from Belgium. By using participatory and child friendly teaching methods – which involves different interactive games, competitions and role-plays, Youth Ambassadors are able to learn in a much more effective way. Youth are also given video cameras to record their discussions in English, so that they can watch themselves speaking and evaluate their own and each other's performances.

"I've been receiving English classes every week, since March. I'm very happy and I'll pay attention and study a lot!" says 14-year-old Lee.





## LIVES SAFE FROM UXO

On September 7 2016, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon inaugurated Lao PDR's own national Sustainable Development Goal on unexploded ordnance (UXO) during the ASEAN Summits.

Goal 18, which relates specifically to Laos, aims to ensure lives are safe from UXO, and remove the UXO obstacle to national development.

“As our community is poor, we don't have enough money to get the land cleared of bombs even when we want to build a house. As the risk is very high, we tell the children not to dig in the ground, in case a bomb goes off,” comments Chou, a grandfather from Nonghet.

“With farming, we use herbicides instead of cutting the weeds by ourselves, as it's too dangerous.

We are also careful when planting corn, as we can't dig too deep into the ground”, he adds.

However, this situation is changing in Nonghet – as over the last five years, ChildFund Laos has funded three large clearance operations on farmland, and several smaller clearance works on school grounds and WATSAN facility construction sites in Nonghet.

In 2015, ChildFund Laos cleared an additional 24.02 hectares of farmland of UXOs in three villages, thanks to funding from ChildFund Australia's Gifts for Good program. This time, 27 bombs were found, with the largest weighing 226kg. All UXOs were safely destroyed.

The support from ChildFund Laos to clear land of UXOs is incredibly valuable to communities as it

reduces the risk of explosions and therefore injuries and casualties, while also enabling people to regain their land and lives, and stop living in fear.

Yeukhang, a mother from Nonghet, explains: “Thanks to ChildFund, we feel happy that we no longer need to worry as much about bombs potentially exploding when our kids are playing in local fields. Also, agricultural production has increased quite a lot due to the removal of UXOs. This is mostly due to the fact that since the land was cleared, we are no longer afraid to plant crops, and we can dig wherever we want, and deeper than before.”

## COLLABORATING TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

Thank you to the following organisations and individuals whose generous support and assistance is vital to the work of ChildFund Laos:



KOICA • Asia Rugby • Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade • Electriciens Sans Frontières • Give a Little Love Foundation • Lao Rugby Federation • Vientiane Youth Center • FLAMES • NORMAILAKSY • Plan Laos • The Rhodes Family • Save the Children • James Sheffield • Soap4Life • Coffey International • Marcelo Ulvert • UNICEF • Women Win • World Vision Laos • The Asia Foundation

ChildFund Laos would also like to thank the Lao Government for their support.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report for year ended 30 June 2016

Income	2016 (US\$)	2015 (US\$)	Balance Sheet	2016 (US\$)	2015 (US\$)
Income	1,874,798	1,802,848	Total Assets	379,753	341,695
Expenditure	1,873,052	1,800,930	Total Liabilities	262,367	226,055
Excess of Income over Expenditure	1,746	1,918	Net Assets	117,386	115,640

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EVERY CHILD  
NEEDS A  
CHILDHOOD**

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