

Service Fraternel d'Entraide ~ Laos

Newsletter ~ April 2013



Women and men working alongside the people of Laos

The future of Laos lies in the exploitation of its huge hydro-electrical potential. The flaunted purpose is to become the “battery” of a region where the consumption of electricity would grow from 6 to 7% per year by the end of 2025. The gross part of the country’s production is exported, bringing in foreign currencies, and therefore new projects are flourishing. The recent project of a 1260 MW power is being built on the Mekong River in the Province of Xayaboury. The environment defenders fear that such a dam may have consequential effects on the life of hundreds of thousands of the river-side inhabitants. Here we are confronted to two different conceptions of development. Furthermore, these huge equipment projects which are financed by neighboring countries hold within themselves the contradictions of choices that are not always under control. Despite of a strong rising electricity production, some areas of the country are not connected to the national network where as others, with demographic and economic growth, force Laos to re import electricity from China or Thailand.

SFE is rather present in areas where electricity is not available everywhere. The challenge is to conciliate reality with the aim of helping the people not to remain on the fringe of the economic development of their country. Development and shortage of available energy is that not an unsolvable question? Our co-workers have to face this reality: how can they bring isolated villages to develop themselves when there are so few means available. For example, how to install a water



supply in a village without a resort to electrical energy...

These technical realities are even worsened by the lack of education. Our team working in the Province of Attapeu noticed that the children often leave primary school without being able to write their own names. This state of things is merely due to the severe lack of school equipment. Although primary school is not the priority objective of SFE project for the area, we had informed you in the newsletter of last November of our wish to intervene at small-scale in 3 schools (500 pupils) at a cost of 4250 euros. You responded by sending donations specifically for this action and the amount reached 2245 euros. Other donations in favor of our projects in general allow us to complete and match the determined target.

Many thanks to all of you!

Information on the spending of received donations:

In the Bengvilay village, the teacher and the older inhabitants asked us to helping with furniture rather than books or pencils as initially planned. We agreed on the construction of a cupboard which can be locked, 24 tables and benches for the children as well as tables and chairs for the teachers, 1000 euros on the whole.





The inhabitants of the villagers agreed to provide a hard wood of good quality for a reasonable price and one person having knowledge of carpentry accepted to make the work. We concluded a contract with them and they have started with the work at the beginning of April.

The Daklakao village asked for exercise books, pencils, white paper and glue for all the children. By the end of March, 800 exercise books, 300 pencils, 2 sets of white paper and 2 big boxes with glue for the sum of 150 euros had been distributed by our team (see photography). They also would like sport equipments and school uniforms for the children; the answer will depend on the funds available, knowing that the school of Maythavone is having the same requests and has not received anything yet.



Even though the utility of this action is undeniable, it remains but a marginal activity of SFE. Agricultural development, participatory community development, tuberculosis prevention and financial support for an ophthalmic program are being continued in 3 provinces of the country. More information on our

website: <http://www.sfe-laos.org>
New perspectives of intervention are being carried out. We will tell you about them in our next newsletter in autumn.



We would like to thank you for your support.


Dr Philippe Klopfenstein, Président



SFE : <http://www.sfe-laos.org> 3 route de Grand-Charmont, 25200 Montbéliard
Correspondance : 36 bis rue de Montbéliard, F 25200 Béthoncourt, Tel 03.81.96.68.04 **Mail** : france@sfe-laos.org
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