

Service Fraternel d'Entraide ~ Laos

Newsletter ~ dec. 2012



Women and men working alongside the people of Laos

In 2012, November was a key month for Laos. After months of civil engineering works, particularly the construction of roads and hotels, the capital Vientiane, welcomed during 2 days the Asia-Europe summit. It was a good opportunity to be seen at its best by the numerous heads of state and the ministers present. This included, José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, François Hollande, the French president and Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, president of the Swiss Confederacy. What will be the concrete result of these meetings after the formal statements?

SFE works in this context of country in search of its own recognition. In the villages where SFE works, we are far from attractive and influential places. In the province of Savannakhet, numerous people are blind after untreated cataracts. There, SFE has been working with the ophthalmological hospital since 2003. It also supports a mobile surgical team equipped with an operating theatre allowing for patients in very remote areas to be treated. We announced in our April Newsletter, the lack of means to finance the travelling of the mobile team. Your gifts permitted us to finance two 10 day campaigns, one in March, the other in June, for an amount of 3540 euros ; about 150 people were able to be operated on.

In the Sekong Province, SFE has made it possible during the last 6 years for families to enter the silk production and receive a decent income. The objective for 2013 is to bring these families to full autonomy in their work.

The on the spot team will then target 14 other villages or approximately 1000 families. There, the priority will be given to basic problems like access to drinking water and food safety.



Another SFE team works on the screening and treatment of tuberculosis in this same province of Sekong. Because of the low rate of tuberculosis screening of children, a special action was carried out amongst them in 2012. Because the rainy season came early, it was sometimes necessary to fetch the children in the rice fields! Report: 1/3 of the children were carriers of tuberculosis.





In the Attopeu province an SFE team works with the families in 9 villages in disease prevention and basic hygiene. Families applying the advice, receive 2 piglets with the instruction to keep them locked up. This leads to a change of behaviour because traditionally, animals circulate freely... Useless to specify the consequences on hygiene! When the animals produce their first young, two piglets are restored and given to a new family which gradually encourages the whole village to have healthier living habits. Food education



with a cooking course for young mothers completes this action. It also arouses interest for the culture of unknown vegetables such as carrots and tomatoes.

While carrying out these actions, the Attopeu team noticed that beside health, hygiene and food, another field deserved attention: education.

majority of schools, a painted piece of wood replaces a blackboard. Exercise books or pens are not common. This is why many children end primary school unable to write their name. Although primary school is not the main objective of the SFE project, we would like to intervene on a small scale in 3 schools : create a library with the most common school books, give sports equipment and school stationary for each pupil (pens, pencils, erasers, rulers and exercise books) For the 500 children of the Daklakao, Maythavon and Bengvilay villages, it represents a 4250 euros budget.

The Lao government made huge efforts to strengthen primary education by building small schools in remote villages. Nevertheless, children have difficulty getting to the end of the primary cycle. There are several obstacles: the Lao language is for the majority of ethnic minorities a foreign language, as well, very often a teacher has to instruct several levels at the same time with little material. In the ma-



Thanking you in advance for all your help.


Dr Philippe Klopfenstein, President.

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