



Alongside Lao People

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Service Fraternel d'Entraide

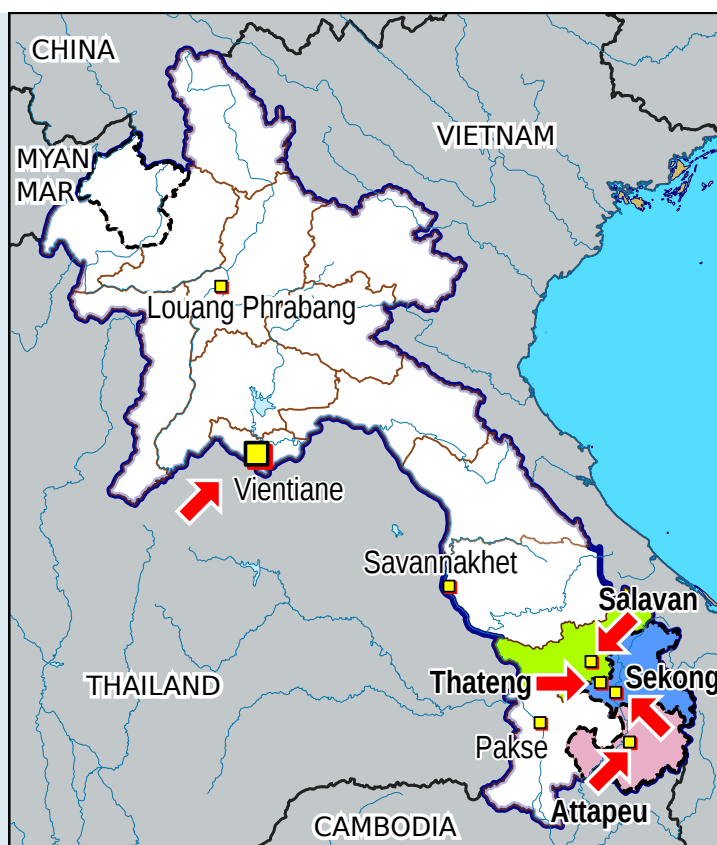
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Where we work

Health Care Strengthening Project, Sekong province	Sekong
Community Agriculture Development Project	Sekong, Thateng district
Attapeu Community Development Project	Attapeu
Health Education Development Project	Salavan
Vientiane Central Office	Vientiane



Message from the Chairman

The year 2018 was of course marked by the collapse of the dam in Attapeu province on 23rd July, resulting in dozens of missing people and more than 3,000 being displaced.

While water is a source of life it could also cause death and destruction.

The SFE team invested a lot of time and effort in providing first aid to the victims of the Attapeu villages, diverting its attention from its other activities. Although reconstruction is underway, it will require more time.

SFE runs four projects in the south of Laos administered through an office in Vientiane and has a total staff strength of 15 expatriates and 50 Laotian employees. Its total budget is 1,000,000 € (2018) for 2 main areas of activity:



Community projects

The villagers who benefit from water supply through the community agricultural development project are truly grateful for this precious commodity that reaches their homes. The Water Committee is organizing itself to raise the financial resources needed to maintain and up-keep the network built with support from SFE.

Alongside water, sanitation, agricultural development and health education are the foundation of our work in villages.

SFE evaluates the most significant changes brought about by its involvement in villages by collecting anecdotal evidences from villagers about the changes made. The aim is to encourage those involved in these improvements and foster others to learn from them to work for the good of their community. More investment by villagers in decision-making and project management is targeted.

The establishment of libraries in the monitored villages generated great interest not only from the pupils but also from the teachers who finally had additional tools to support their teaching.

Health projects

SFE provides medical support to the provincial hospital as well as the district hospitals and health centres in pilot villages as part of its second phase in Sekong in the first phase in Saravane, The main goal is to strengthen the province's health system with a strong emphasis on building medical, paramedical and administrative capacities. Scholarships are also provided to enable young people to train as nurses or doctors in certain specialities.

Although one may feel that our initiatives are limited in scope in relation to what remains to be done the impact has thus been significant. The Saravane hospital management suggested to us in January 2019 that they agree for us to support the remaining 68 health centres in the province in addition to the 5 that our teams are already supporting. It is well known that "small streams make big rivers", so we persevere in the task before us with motivated teams as well as with all those who support in one way or another, directly or indirectly, to our commitment to the Lao people.

Thank you once again to every one of you for your involvement, in whichever way.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philippe Ulop/enstein".

Chairman of SFE

20

**Years of
Experience
in Laos**

21

Projects

64

**Local
Employees**

19

Expatriate

**In 2018, SFE provided support
to more than 14000 people**



422

**Children
get better
education**



4150

**People accessing
clean water and
sanitation**



376

**People trained
in medical
field**



4650

**People get
better
agriculture
practice**

Investing in Lao people

Sharing knowledge

Preparing a better future together



Alongside Lao People

Creating trusting relationships to save lives

Spending time in villages is a good opportunity to be there at the time when women need it, help them to go to a Health Centre and trust the staff there.

The SFE education team works in villages to raise awareness on health, agriculture, nutrition and development in the evenings and then they sleep over in the village afterwards.

Late one evening, a woman had a breech delivery in the village but didn't ask for help because other women had told her she can manage it in the village. During the night, when we heard that the woman was having difficulties in delivering, we went to her house but unfortunately it was too late. The baby was already dead and no resuscitation was possible to save the baby.

The next morning we visited the poor mother and had the opportunity to speak to other women as well and explain why it is important to go to the health centre for antenatal care and delivery even if it seemed easy to deliver in the village, that it was dangerous for the mother and the child.

After this sad experience, we then had a positive one. We were having a health discussion with pregnant and breastfeeding mothers one morning in another village. We asked if there were other pregnant women and they told us that one woman was starting to have labour pains and was about to deliver soon. We rushed to her

home and she was alone in a small house, hidden behind a screen with nobody to help her because in this village women have to manage the delivery on their own. We proposed to take her to the health centre by car to which she accepted. Our staff called the health centre to tell them that we were coming with a woman for delivery and to make sure that someone was ready to assist her with her delivery. It was one of the health centres which we visit and train the health workers every month.

When we arrived, the staff was ready to welcome her and check the stage of the delivery. After less than an hour, the baby was born. It was the first time that a woman from this village delivered at a health centre. The mother was so happy to receive the help that she called her baby girl 'Thida', after the daughter of the SFE nurse who brought her to the health facility.

Although we can't help or bring all the pregnant women to a health centre for delivery, women who received our help and have had a good experience with the health centre staff will share this experience and encourage other women in their village to go to health facilities for their delivery too.



Providing clean infrastructure, building healthier life

How the work of SFE change the daily life in villages. Testimony from Sentai Village.

The village of Sentai did not used to be helped by the SFE project. In the past the people and organizations of our village had been uncomfortable and unhappy, as our village often had many health problems. There was diarrhea and malaria. The effect was that some people lost money on the cost of medical treatments, and some of our villagers died of these diseases. The chief and villagers had no ideas how to solve these problems, so they were just living according to the lifestyle of living in extreme poverty and not understanding the causes of our problems.

Since the project has been working in our village, the community understood the importance of latrines and 100% latrine use in order to prevent diarrhea and malaria. The villagers began to participate to build latrines with the help of the SFE project. Everyone in the village who has been

involved in building of latrines has had successful results. Some families have their own latrines, and some families do not have their own latrines so are using with other families in a temporary situation. Everyone now knows that we must use latrines for good health.

The village chief of Sentai and the villagers hope that the families who do not have latrines should get one during this year. Since we have the latrines, the diarrhea and malaria have become more reduced than ever before. The people in the village are not sick as much as when there were no toilets. In Sentai village, disease is reduced an average of 80%. Nowadays, the communities are happier and safer from diarrhea and malaria diseases, so much so that all the villagers want to use the latrines in 100% of households.



Training that has a lifesaving impact

Learning new skills and developing capacities of health care workers are at the core of SFE's developmental values. Through teaching we achieve better practice. Through better practice we achieve better quality of care.

The project aims at improving capacities of the healthcare staff in various domains. One of these domains is the maternal and child health domain. We provide capacity building support to the staff for improving their skills during delivery of babies. Our specific approach is to focus on technical and practical aspects during the training.

A training on breech delivery was done in Sekong provincial hospital. Breech delivery is a special condition that requires special skills in order to deliver the baby without putting the mother and the baby's life at risk. During the training we used manikins in order to demonstrate how to assist a delivery with this very special presentation. For most of the participants, it was the first time that they attended a training in this specific topic.

One of the participants, had to deliver a baby with breech presentation at night without supervision of a more experienced staff a few weeks after the training. She followed the steps that were coached during the training and could deliver a breeched baby for the first time in her career. Both, the baby and the mother, experienced a safe delivery through this precious skill that was given to the midwife. This also boosted the confidence of the midwife who takes great pride of her success and the community at large is thankful for the good quality of care that is now available in Sekong.

Training healthcare workers who do not have the required skills and knowledge to provide good quality care is fundamental in order to build trust in the health care system.



Alongside Lao people in Attapeu for 20 years

SFE celebrated its 20 year-presence in the province of Attapeu on 30th April 2018.



In April 1998, SFE signed its first project charter with the Government of Lao PDR to support the Attapeu provincial hospital. Soon afterwards, the first SFE-team was formed, first contacts with hospital staff and the Government of Lao were established and the first SFE-foot-prints were carved in the memory of Lao people in Attapeu. Many people in Attapeu could relate to their experiences with SFE. The current Head of the Health Department does not hesitate to repeatedly express her gratitude for the support SFE provided especially when one of her close relatives was treated by SFE doctors for a serious illness.

In 2010, SFE embarked on its efforts in community development work in remote and rural areas of Attapeu. Our SFE team has had the honour of witnessing brightly smiling villagers overwhelmed to have running water in their village for the first time, have enjoyed evening awareness building sessions with giggling villagers learning to use a toilet for the first time and have seen the nutrition status of malnourished children improving

significantly after the provision of nutritious food and adequate awareness. They have toiled together with villagers building model gardens, they have shared moments of laughter with kids and adults whom they have engaged in playing games with and have slept on wooden decked floors in remote villages and eaten with villagers in their smoke-covered kitchens and have exchanged notes on the many challenges and hardships faced by the villagers. In essence, SFE has been building long-lasting relationships reaching far beyond mere technical advice and support; for 20 years our teams have been working alongside Lao people in both, urban and rural Attapeu. Unseen potentials have been unlocked, technical and social skills have been honed and new perspectives have instilled. SFE will continue its endeavour in this successful development approach for future years to see more lives being transformed and relationships being strengthened with villagers, the Lao Government and our team.

Dam collapse and flash flood in Sanamxai district Attapeu province

On the 24th of July 2018, part of the dam system of a nearly completed hydro power plant collapsed causing a mass destruction to downstream villages.

Intense rainfall in June and July 2018 caused water levels to rise to unusual levels. 17 of the 18 provinces of Laos lost rice fields, houses, livestock, infrastructure and even peoples' lives as a consequence of flooding. The most devastating flood hit six villages located downstream the reservoir of a hydro power plant in Sanamxai district / Attapeu province. Villagers reported waves of up to 20m breaking through their villages sweeping away everything that was along its way. At least 100 villagers lost their lives in this catastrophe.

SFE mobilized all its forces to help in the best possible way. The initial lack of information made it challenging for all relief teams to know where help would be needed most. After 10 days, however, SFE could send its first team to Pindong village which, by then, served as a displacement camp. Pindong is one of SFE's target villages in development work and is located about 7km

away from the destroyed villages. Access to this village was very challenging and only possible by a 300km detour. With the support of many donors and organisations (Arda language school, Terra Clear, SNV, ADRA, World Vision, Humanity and Inclusion...) SFE could bring hope to people who literally lost everything by providing essential material, playing games with traumatized kids and adults and setting up indispensable infrastructure for sanitary and hygiene (water system, toilets, waste management).

In addition to the villagers in the displacement camps being most grateful for SFE's support during this extremely difficult time, the Lao Government too greatly appreciated SFE's contribution. The Government coordinator expressed his gratitude with a customary long handshake to emphasize what he was saying: thank you very much for your unparalleled support!



Perspective for 2019

There are four ongoing projects in 2019 in Salavan, Sekong and Attapeu provinces which aim to cover a total of 14 000 beneficiaries from a dozen ethnic minorities. Almost 400 health professionals will partner with SFE to not only serve the communities through the countries they represent but also for professional development in their own respective careers. In line with SFE's motto, we walk alongside Lao people and share knowledge in order to combine technical expertise with understanding of the local context and needs. We have seen over the years how this combination is successful and life changing. Investing in people is the most sustainable choice one can make!

Two of our projects will come to a closure in 2019. Therefore, we will transition from our partner communities in the best possible way whilst focusing on strategic directions for the coming years. There are very exciting prospective for which we need to develop new technical and financial partnerships:

- **Partnership with the nursing school in Attapeu city.** - This school has sought the assistance of SFE to come and support them by improving the curriculum and training to deliver more effective training programmes to its students and a complete 3-years curriculum. This project is completely in alignment and progresses from our current hospital work where we train graduate nurses. Working upstream in the nursing school is a way to reach higher impact.

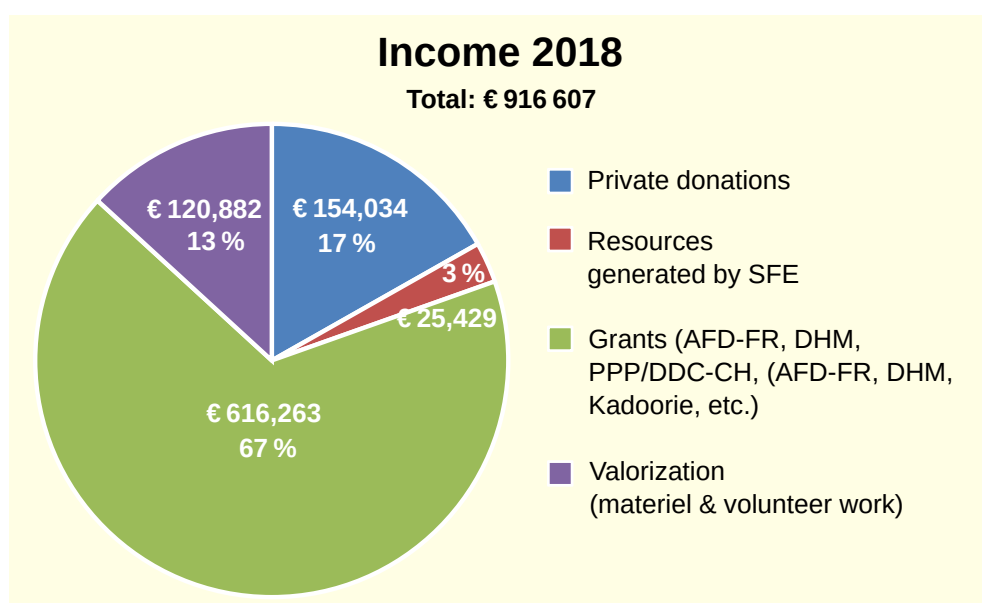
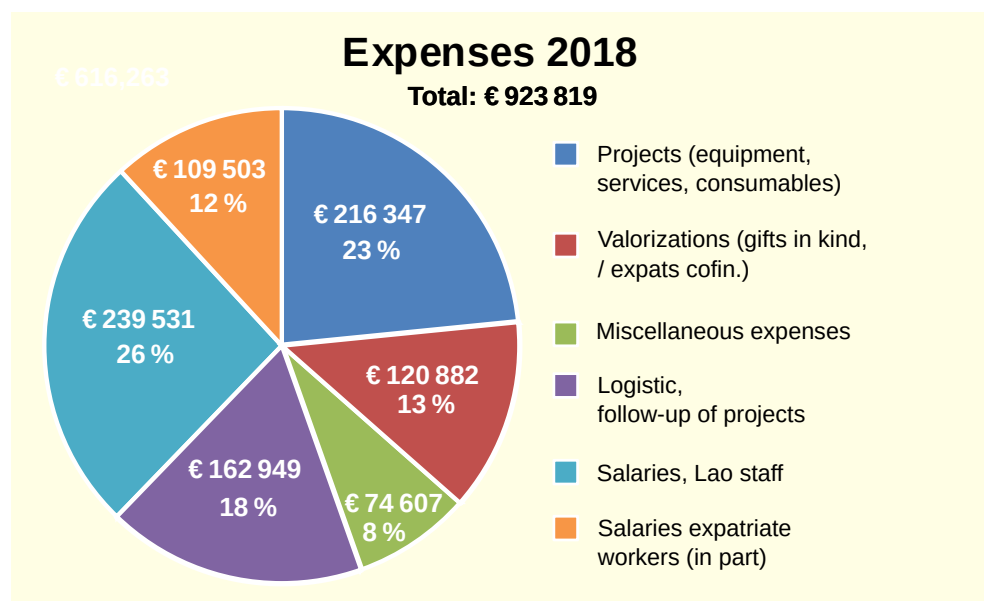
- **Partnership with TerraClear water filter company in Pakse.** - This partnership will allow SFE to support TerraClear in developing a programme to reach the poorest families in the 4 provinces of southern Laos. 10,000 of these families will have the opportunity to buy an affordable ceramic water filter and to improve awareness on hygiene over 3 years.

- **Development of a project to reach people with disabilities in Attapeu rural areas.** - People with disabilities are very vulnerable and marginalized, to the point where they are sometimes isolated by their families. This situation can be changed by raising awareness and conducting activities to increase their dignity and the abilities of these people whom we believe have as much value as anybody else.

We want to thank all partners and friends of SFE whose involvement is making all this possible!



Financial report





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