



ANNUAL REPORT

2020 – 2021

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

ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 12 organisations which assists almost 23 million children and their families in 70 countries. ChildFund Australia is a registered charity, a member of the Australian Council for International Development, and fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which manages the Australian Government’s overseas aid program.

ChildFund began working in Laos in 2010 and works in partnership to create community and systems change which enables vulnerable children and young people, in all their diversity, to assert and realise their rights. Projects are implemented in the capital of Vientiane, as well as Huaphanh and Xiengkouang Province, some of the country’s poorest regions with significantly high unexploded ordnance contamination.

With a focus on upholding child rights and improving access to quality education, ChildFund in Laos also prioritises projects which focus on child nutrition, sexual reproductive health and rights, media literacy and job readiness.

ChildFund in Laos

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Front cover: Boun, aged 7-years-old.



This year has been incredibly challenging for all of us, but even more so for vulnerable children and families across Laos. COVID-19 has hugely impacted our programs across the country.

The pandemic has disrupted health systems, forced schools into lockdown and triggered economic instability. ChildFund in Laos has been quick to respond to the needs of children and their communities. At the beginning of the outbreak, and again during the second wave, I was privileged to witness our teams' dedication to the emergency response.

ChildFund worked with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Laos Ministry of Health to support mass vaccination efforts. We pivoted existing programs to respond to COVID-19 by distributing personal protective equipment and collaborated with local health authorities to deliver health information and vital training. We also partnered with UNICEF and the Laos Ministry of Education to ensure children could continue to learn online while schools were closed.

Despite encountering many challenges, ChildFund has been able to achieve some sound results. We partnered with civil society organisations, government agencies, intergovernmental agencies and the private sector to undertake our emergency response activities. Together we created a road map towards our vision for sustainability and localisation. This empowered our organisation to learn and encourage a culture of being responsive, inclusive, accountable and transparent.

Looking towards the future, ChildFund remains committed to tackling this crisis and supporting vulnerable children and families. The pandemic has magnified existing inequalities and injustice. It is vital that we continue to deliver programs which support children's nutrition, health, education and access to opportunities so that they can reach their full potential.

ChildFund will continue to work in partnership with children, youth, women, government, stakeholders and supporters to make sure children are not left behind. I would like to thank our generous supporters who have stood alongside the children we work with through this difficult time.

Despite the many challenges that lie ahead, we remain positive. Over the next year, the ChildFund in Laos team will do all in their power to make sure children can access the services they need to become empowered, thriving individuals.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Biju Abraham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Biju Abraham
Country Director
ChildFund in Laos

We want every child with whom we work to be able to say:

I AM SAFE

Laithong is learning life skills in the Ready for Life program

Laithong is a 17-year-old youth volunteer and is part of the Ready for Life Project Huaphanh Province. He has been a part of the program since 2019 and since then, has learnt valuable life skills that have helped him navigate life as a teenager.

He said that through the training "I have learned various skills from the project such as decision-making and problem-solving, leadership, time management, and self-awareness building skills."

The program supports young people to develop self protective behaviors and tackles protection issues that they face on a day to day basis.

Laithong has learnt how to keep himself safe online, a rising concern as children spend more time online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. "I take a second to study the account and post I am viewing, do a fact-check before sharing on my social media and don't be fooled by viral posts."

He also knows where to go to for support. "There is a clear reporting process that students are aware of at school to raise any concerns about our safety or security in any situation. I know I can report directly to our teachers or the school director who will take action and connect me to the assistance I need. This makes me feel safer."



Youth members of the Ready for Life program.

I AM EDUCATED

Digital library inspiring children to read and learn Lao

A digital library with hundreds of books is supporting children from an ethnic minority group in Laos stay engaged in school, while also having the opportunity to learn how to read and write in the national language of Lao.

Long-time primary school teacher Toui says many of his students communicate with one another in their ethnic language rather than Lao. Over his three decades of teaching, Toui has seen children of this ethnic minority group progress very slowly when it comes to reading, writing and speaking Laos' national language.

The introduction of the digital library, introduced by ChildFund in Laos in partnership with Library for All, has inspired students to learn Lao, and increased their confidence. "Since the digital library was introduced into two years in our school, students have been more motivated to come to school, are interested in reading, and have developed their Lao reading and speaking skills," says Toui.

"Many children in this area are shy. They don't often share their opinions and ideas. Since the digital library was introduced, the children have improved their communication skills, and they ask more questions."

Each student in Toui's class can access to electronic tablet to use the library, which has more than 200 age and culturally appropriate books written in Lao.

"It's brilliant that the digital library has inspired and increased the number of students learning the Lao language," says Toui.



Child in Laos using the digital library at school.

I CONTRIBUTE

Youth volunteers helping to respond to COVID-19 pandemic

ChildFund in Laos worked in partnership with the Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation to encourage widespread take-up of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Staff from ChildFund's Vientiane office provided voluntary support at the public clinics. ChildFund supported by checking patient blood pressure prior to vaccination and provided information support to answer pressing questions about the vaccines.

"We believe that providing reliable health information is essential for people to choose to be vaccinated," said Touly Vilayphone, a ChildFund project officer.

Youth volunteers who took part in ChildFund's Child Participation for Resilience Project, were also eager to support. One youth volunteer, Tawan, said: "The country is in lockdown. Schools are closed. I must stay at home with nothing to do while we need more frontline workers volunteers during this difficult situation. So, I decided to volunteer at a vaccination event at Mittaphab Hospital."

Tawan said that it was important for people to have the

opportunity to ask questions about the vaccines. "People need facts and information about the COVID-19 vaccines."

In northern Laos, ChildFund worked in partnership with the Government of Xam Neua District, to provide essential supplies to 15 villages in Huaphanh Province, including soap, hand sanitiser and surgical masks.

"Protecting people and communities must be a collaborative approach," said Touly. "I am proud to be working with partners and youth volunteers to support people coming to get vaccinated. Responding to COVID-19 is the responsibility of everyone, not just our healthcare workers."



I HAVE A FUTURE

Laying the foundations to keep mothers and babies safe and healthy

In remote villages in Huaphanh Province in Laos, volunteers from ChildFund's maternal and child health and nutrition project helped reduce the stress that mothers can face and ensure they and their babies are safe and healthy.

Mother-of-four Souk is a ChildFund volunteer. Since 2018, Souk has been helping dozens of mothers in her village care for themselves and their babies for 1,000 days, the time from when a woman becomes pregnant to her child's second birthday. This period of 1,000 days is critical to a child's healthy development. Good nutrition for both mother and baby, for example, is necessary for proper brain development and laying the foundations for good health throughout a child's life.

"Before ChildFund's 1,000 days activities, some mothers and their families were not fully taking care of their own health," Souk says. "Mothers worked too hard, did not eat a variety of food groups, and did not pay attention to prenatal health needs like taking iron pills."

After learning about about maternal and child health through ChildFund's project, Souk is now helping mothers develop safer and healthy practices.

In ChildFund's training sessions for volunteers, Souk learnt about maternal and child health and is now helping mothers develop safer and healthy practices.





I HAVE A FUTURE

Boun is learning in a disability inclusive classroom

Seven-year-old Boun (pictured above) lives in a small, remote, disadvantaged community in Huaphanh Province in the eastern part of Laos. He is in Grade 3 and loves school. Lao is Boun's favourite subject.

Boun lives with a physical and a learning disability that means he needs extra support in the classroom and the help of his father to travel to and from school.

Both of Boun's parents work long hours, growing and harvesting rice and vegetables, to put food on the table and to send Boun and his three siblings to school.

His father, Xiengphet, says Boun's learning difficulties began when Boun was four years old, after he suffered a severe illness that also left him with a mobility issue that makes it difficult and painful to walk.

Boun's teacher Khamlian has had no formal training on how to prepare lessons for children with a disability to help them reach their full learning potential.

His school also lacks the facilities and resources to help children with a disability to excel in their studies, so they are often left behind their peers. Stigma and discrimination also prevent children like Boun from participating in activities and opportunities.

Yet, Boun sees a brighter future for himself. He is determined to keep going to school. "He is strong-willed," his father says.

His teacher, Khamlian, has described him as a "determined" and "brave" student. "He is not afraid to ask questions about things that he is curious about," Khamlian says.

ChildFund in Laos and its local partners are working with schools like Boun's to create inclusive, safe learning environments for children with a disability.

This includes training teachers to prepare tailored lessons for children with a disability, providing learning resources to schools and organising village festivals to raise awareness about children's rights to reduce stigma and discrimination against children living with a disability.

COLLABORATING TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

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



Aid Children with Disability Association (ACDA) • Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade • CARE International • Comité de coopération avec le Laos (CCL) • Facebook Singapore • Gender Development Association (GDA) • Global Shapers • Lao Rugby Federation (LRF) • Lao Cyber Emergency Response Team (LaoCERT) • Life Skills Development Association (LSDA) • Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) • Ministry of Health (MOH) • Ministry of Post and Telecommunications • Plan International • Save the Children International • The National Commission for the Advancement of Women and Mothers and Children (NCAWMC), Provincial and District CAWMC • UNICEF • UNFPA • Unitel

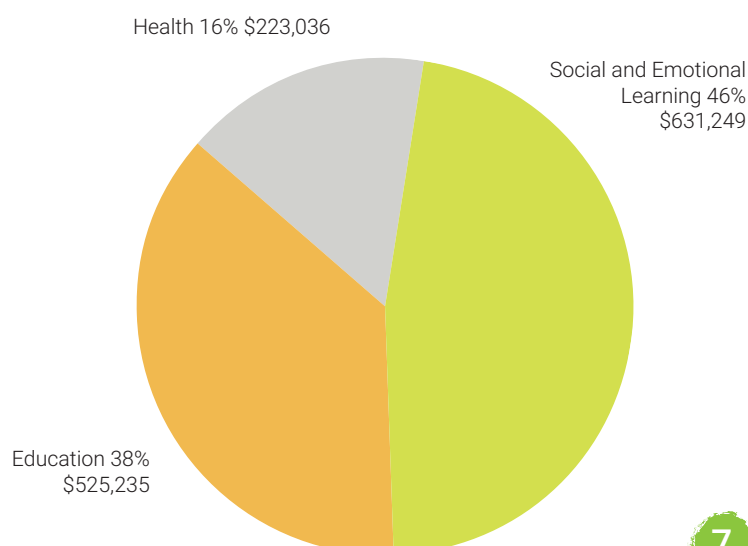
FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report for year ended 30 June 2021

REVENUE	FY20 (US\$)	FY21 (US\$)
Donations	483,047	278,506
Grants	1,836,591	1,327,115
Other income	5,068	12,696
Total revenue	2,324,706	1,618,317

EXPENDITURE	FY20 (US\$)	FY21 (US\$)
Program and projects	1,877,500	1,379,520
Program support	293,125	140,891
Accountability and administration	147,034	98,490
Total expenditure	2,317,659	1,618,901

PROGRAM EXPENDITURE FY2021 (US\$)



**BECAUSE
EVERY CHILD
NEEDS A
CHILDHOOD**

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