



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2019 – 2020

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 11 organisations which assists almost 16 million children and their families in over 60 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 Huaphanh and Xiengkouang Provinces, as well as in the capital of Vientiane.

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: Mai, age 10, Laos.



This was an important year for ChildFund in Laos as we celebrated 10 years of project work in our partner communities!

We've come a long way since our first education project in Nonghet District

in 2010, and we have had many achievements and changes along the way.

This year has been a remarkable year. In addition to changes in leadership, project locations, and strategic priorities, we've had to adapt to the challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

We have continued our vital health work in areas such as strengthening mothers' knowledge on child nutrition, and are using innovative methods to improve the quality of education. This includes tablet-based reading activities and community-led promotion of children's education rights.

We have continued to make strides in elevating children's voices. This year, ChildFund trained more than 200 young people as peer educators on important topics such as online safety, reproductive health, and life skills that can help prevent violence, child marriage, trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.

Young people also have new opportunities to engage in creative writing and youth-led research activities that allow them to express their thoughts and their values.

Simultaneously, ChildFund has taken the time to deepen its understanding of the challenges facing children in Laos. This includes conducting research into the barriers faced by children living with disability, and the causes of early marriage.

With this knowledge, we can reach the most disadvantaged young people in our project areas and advocate on their behalf. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has

presented unique challenges for our staff and local partners, ChildFund has still found ways to support our children and communities during this difficult time.

Personal protective equipment, including face shields, gowns and gloves, has been distributed to health centres. Vital health information has been provided to rural communities, and schools have been equipped with soap and handwashing facilities.

ChildFund also launched social media campaigns to encourage people to stay safely at home during the Lao New Year holidays, and on ways to reintegrate students back to school.

After a year of adapting to a constantly changing environment, ChildFund is excited to move forward into new opportunities. As we strengthen our key thematic areas in education, health and child protection – with inclusion, gender and advocacy as cross-cutting issues – we will also converge our efforts on localisation and resilience.

We are pursuing closer partnerships with civil society in Laos and with other development partners alike, knowing that we will need co-operation and co-ordination to ensure a safer, robust, sustainable and more promising future for all Lao children.

Our thanks and best wishes go out to our partners, donors, supporters, and all the children and community members who have joined with ChildFund in Laos to make our work possible.

Biju Abraham
Country Director
ChildFund in Laos

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

I AM SAFE

Building children's internet skills and knowledge

Ensuring young people are safe online is an increasingly important part of ChildFund in Laos' programs.

Today, internet access has expanded to some of Laos' most remote regions. While digital connectivity offers enormous benefits for children and young people, it can also increase the risks of online abuse and exploitation.

In response, ChildFund and local partner National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children are helping to equip young people with the skills and knowledge they need to stay safe online.

In a remote village in Nonghet District in northern Laos, 19-year-old Yerveu (pictured right) has been participating in ChildFund's online safety training sessions.

She has learnt how to use privacy settings on

social media, and understand how to safely and respectfully interact with others on the internet.

Yerveu is now feeling more confident about how to engage in a digital world. "In the past, there were so many people who would comment on my pictures, and it made me feel like I didn't have any privacy," she says.

"When we share our opinions on social media it's very important for us to be careful. We should consider what we are writing before we post or comment because after we've put something online, people across the world can see it and learn about us."



Yerveu, age 19.

I AM EDUCATED

Digital libraries helping to improve quality of education

In the rural communities where ChildFund in Laos works, schools often lack the space, funds, and capacity to manage resources such as libraries. Books and other reading materials are often in short supply for students.

Working with Library For All, ChildFund is helping to improve the quality of education for children in disadvantaged communities by introducing digital libraries in schools.

Books stored in the digital libraries are age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and written in children's local language.

Over the past year, eight digital libraries with 200 titles have been established in schools. ChildFund has also supplied tablets so students can easily access these libraries, and trained teachers on how to use and manage the system.

When the COVID-19 crisis prevented children from attending school, ChildFund and Library For All worked together to ensure that these collections of children's books were also available online so families could access books for their children to read at home.



Eight digital libraries with 200 titles have been established in Laos schools.

I CONTRIBUTE

Supporting children with opportunities to collaborate with leaders

In November 2019, child delegates from Laos took part in the Asian Children's Summit held in Bangkok.

The summit focused on four main themes: violence against children; children's rights and the environment; children's rights in the digital environment; and children on the move.

The delegates – Phanomphone and Phoukhao, both age 16 (pictured right) – were chosen to represent children in their countries because of their leadership skills and passion to make a difference to children's lives in their communities.

The trip to Thailand was a unique opportunity for them to learn from, and collaborate with, other children from different countries and cultures. It was also an opportunity for them to speak to leaders about the problems that are affecting children in their countries, and possible solutions to these issues.

Phanomphone says of the experience: "Don't be scared to share your opinion. Just be who you are and

try your best in everything." Phoukhao added: "Let's try to come out of our comfort zones. If you don't, you will not be able to do what you want to do."

Children attending the summit pushed for an end to violence against children. They called on their leaders to address poverty, discrimination, harmful norms and traditional practices, abuse, mental health problems, and cyber-bullying in their communities.



I HAVE A FUTURE

Empowering young people through life skills and sport

Chan Lor (pictured right) has been a coach with ChildFund Pass It Back in Laos for more than two years. Not only has it given him a new sporting passion in life – rugby – but it has equipped him with important and valuable skills for his future.

Chan Lor says: "I have learned a lot from the curriculum, and I make sure I apply what I learn.

"I have also noticed that my life has changed for the better. I use my life skills experiences when I train my teams and, when the players have problems, I can help them to understand each other."

For Chan Lor, leadership skills are also important. "They can be used to help people respect one another and promote solidarity in the community," he says. "Being a leader and working to support children's development in the community go hand in hand."

While Chan Lor decides whether to continue his studies, he is sure of one thing: he is determined to

continue being a coach, regardless of where he is located.

"Right now, the most important thing for me is that I can support children to overcome the problems they face in their lives with skills that we develop together in our sessions," he says.



ChildFund-trained volunteers, including Souk (inset), are helping to keep mothers and their newborn babies safe and healthy.



I HAVE A FUTURE

A thousand days of healthcare to set up children for life

Becoming a new mother can be accompanied by many exciting and important new tasks. It can also be a stressful time for many women and their families as they try to navigate motherhood and the best way to care for their babies and themselves.

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

Mother-of-four Souk is one of these volunteers. Since 2018, Souk has been helping dozens of mothers in her village care for themselves and their babies during the critical 1,000 days: the time from when a woman becomes pregnant to her child's second birthday.

This period of 1,000 days can have a significant impact to a child's development. Good nutrition for both mother and baby, for example, is necessary for brain development and lays the foundations for good health.

In the remote villages of Laos, says Souk, women and their families have traditionally relied on outdated and potentially unsafe practices because of the lack of access to healthcare, information and advice.

"Before ChildFund's '1,000 days' activities, most 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 giving birth they followed traditional practices like restricting what foods they ate. They also lacked some of the skills to take care of newborns, and sometimes they did not follow doctors' instructions on breastfeeding, because they believed they had to give their baby food and water so they would not be hungry and thirsty.

"This led to many babies becoming unhealthy and malnourished, which sometimes caused stunting and underweight infants."

Souk says prior to ChildFund's project, there was no family planning. Many mothers had multiple pregnancies within a short period of time. "It was unhealthy for mothers," she says.

In her role as a volunteer with ChildFund, Souk gives advice to mothers about how to best care for their infants, including the importance of breastfeeding, and monitors children's growth and health.

She also ensures that pregnant mothers receive prenatal checks at least four times before giving birth, and their families assist with housework and workloads so they have time to rest.

Souk says she is seeing positive changes in families within six months of working with them.

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:



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European Union

- Aid Children with Disability Association (ACDA) • CARE International • Comité de coopération avec le Laos (CCL) • GDA • Lao Rugby Federation • Life Skills Development Association (LSDA) • Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) • Ministry of Health (MOH) • Plan International • Save the Children International • The National Commission for the Advancement of Women and Mothers-Children (NCAWMC) • UNFPA • UNICEF
- Vientiane Youth Centre for Health and Development

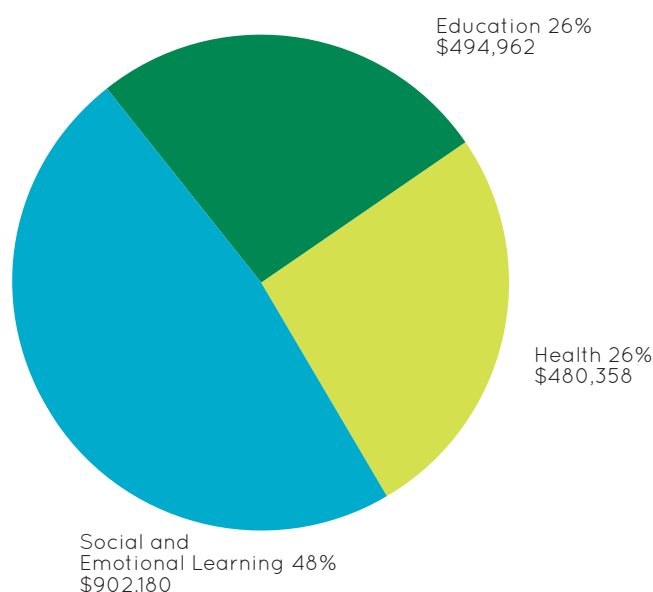
FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report for year ended 30 June 2020

REVENUE	FY1920 (US\$)	FY1819 (US\$)
Donation	483,047	494,636
Grants	1,836,591	2,371,499
Other income	5,068	-
Total revenue	2,324,706	2,866,135

EXPENDITURE	FY1920 (US\$)	FY1819 (US\$)
Program and project	1,877,500	2,464,328
Program support	293,125	123,101
Accountability and administration	147,034	291,087
Total expenditure	2,317,659	2,878,516

PROGRAM EXPENDITURE
FY1920 (US\$)



**BECAUSE
EVERY CHILD
NEEDS A
CHILDHOOD**

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