

Swiss doctor vows to help Lao mothers and babies until his dying day

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“I will help Lao women and children until I draw my last breath.” These are the remarkable words of the President of the Swiss Laos Hospital Project (SLHP), Dr Urs Lauper, who has worked to improve maternal and child health in Laos since 2000.

The SLHP has been actively involved in Laos for 15 years, aiming to reduce mother and child mortality here. All of its activities have been carried out under mutual informal agreements between the Mother and Child Health Hospital (MCHH) and the SLHP, with the consent of the Ministry of Health.

Under the leadership of Dr Lauper, 69, the SLHP has focused on improving obstetrics services, mainly in the MCHH.

The project has developed antenatal care, introduced ultrasound diagnostics and cardiotocography, and taught hospital staff about care during delivery, in a bid to reduce mother and child morbidity and mortality during and after birthing.

In this first period, the project also supplied medical instruments, technical



Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh Saesathit.



Dr Urs Lauper.

devices and financing for an extension and renovation of the delivery department of the MCHH. Another focus was the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

In a second step, the SLHP started to support neonatal services in the MCHH starting in 2003. Since then the department of neonatal

care developed very strongly into a training centre for all other neonatal services in the country. Also in this field, numerous medical instruments and technical devices were provided, as well as financing for renovation of the newborn care unit and the paediatric department of the MCHH.

At the same time, the SLHP

expanded its support from the MCHH to the northern provinces, supporting obstetrics and newborn care at the Xieng Khuang provincial hospital. Over time, the SLHP also provided new maternity services and an operating theatre at Kham district hospital.

Dr Lauper said that all the success has resulted from the strong collaboration between MCHH and other Lao partners, especially the Director General of MCHH, Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh Saesathit, which has helped to drive the project forward over the years.

The SLHP and local Lao partners are now setting up a neonatal network. The goal is to establish newborn care departments in all of the large provinces.

These neonatal departments should have close collaboration, regular workshops on relevant topics in neonatal care, exchange programmes for training staff, appropriate facilities and financial support for medication and supplies. Additionally, neonatal departments will play a key role in training smaller facilities at the district level in primary resuscitation and newborn care.

Since a large proportion of deliveries in Laos still take place at home, part of the SLHP activities focused on

improving home delivery by inventing a “delivery kit”, which provides the minimum materials needed for a clean, hygienic birth and sterile cut of the umbilical cord as well as cord disinfection to prevent neonatal sepsis. This aspect of the SLHP is expanding and will provide nationwide distribution and instruction on use of the delivery kit.

As clean water plays a large part in ensuring general health, the SLHP has supported several clean water projects, for example an ecological wastewater clearing facility for the district hospital in Kham district and several villages in the same province.

In addition, a group of general practitioners joined the project, working regularly at Kham district hospital, focusing on teaching general medicine to the local staff. This part of the programme has since extended to Khoun and Nonghet districts.

Since 2010, a Swiss hospital in the city of Winterthur has taken on special responsibility for the Xieng Khuang provincial hospital. Both hospitals agreed informally on a mutual partnership. This collaboration is incorporated in the Swiss Laos Hospital Project.

Since 2011 another strong collaboration has developed between a team of obstetricians

and midwives in the Swiss city of Frauenfeld, providing teaching, medical equipment and appliances to the Huaphan provincial hospital.

Associate Prof. Dr Bouavanh Saesathit said Dr Lauper’s outline of the SLHP project was just a small part of what had been achieved since the Swiss team first began helping Lao women and children in 2000.

“I think it’s very rare to meet such a good-hearted person who really wants to help Laos like Dr Lauper does,” he said. “I can say that now Dr Lauper has become half Swiss and half Lao. This is because he spends six months of the year using his time and his life to help people in Laos, and lives in Switzerland for the other six months.”

The SLHP led by Dr Lauper and his Swiss colleagues aims to help medical staff by ensuring they are able to understand the new procedures they are taught and can carry them out themselves. For example, SLHP provided ultrasound machines to provincial hospitals and staff at these hospitals have been encouraged to learn how to use the equipment.

“All of the Swiss assistance directly reduces the death rate of mothers and children in Laos,” Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh said.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(Announcement No. 15-11)

OPEN TO: All Qualified Candidates
POSITION: Translator, Personal Services Contract
OPENING DATE: April 23, 2015
CLOSING DATE: Until filled
WORK HOURS: Full-time; 40 hours/week
SALARY: Salary will be based on the qualifications of the applicant.

NOTE: THIS IS A LOCAL, CONTRACT POSITION. THE SELECTED CANDIDATE WILL COME UNDER LAOLABOR LAW. ALL ORDINARY RESIDENT APPLICANTS MUST BE RESIDING IN LAOS AND HAVE THE REQUIRED WORK AND/OR RESIDENCY PERMITS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION.

The U.S. Embassy in Bangkok is seeking an individual for the position of Lao/English Translator. This position is based in Vientiane, Laos.

BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION

Under the supervision of the Human Resources Officer in the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, the incumbent provides timely and tailored English translations of Lao-language documents and media (audio and video). The position is full-time (40 hours per week). This contract position will work independently and not out of the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane. The successful candidate will have native fluency in Lao as well as excellent English language skills and demonstrate the ability to quickly produce idiomatic and grammatically correct written products. The position will require good judgment, basic analytic skills, and the ability to meet deadlines.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

NOTE: All applicants must address each selection criterion detailed below with specific and comprehensive information supporting each item.

- Education:** At least completion of secondary school is required. A college or specialized institute degree is desirable.
- Prior Work Experience:** Two to three years’ experience working as a translator is preferred.
- Language Proficiency:** Level IV (fluent) in written and spoken English and Lao is required.
- Knowledge:** Some knowledge of both U.S. and Lao foreign and domestic policy issues, and Laos’ economic, social and political structure is required.
- Skills and Abilities:** Ability to work under deadline. Ability to scan, comprehend and summarize quickly. Flexibility to adjust to shifting priorities and focuses. Ability to draft and translate. Excellent knowledge of word processing and modern transmission systems.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants for this position must submit the following for the application to be considered:

- Resume and contact information
- Any other documentation (e.g., essays, certificates, awards, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualification requirements of the position as listed above.

SUBMIT APPLICATION TO

Human Resources Office
 American Embassy
 Thadeua Road Km9, Somvang Tai Village
 PO Box 114, Vientiane, Laos
 (Hardcopy or e-mail attachments are accepted)

POINT OF CONTACT

Telephone: 856-21-487221
 Fax: 856-21-488002
 E-mail: Schroederpa@state.gov

Interested persons should contact Embassy Human Resources Officer for more information.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

CLOSING DATE FOR THIS POSITION: Until filled

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Vientiane Times bank account

Vientiane Times new bank account at BCEL - Acc No.: 010110000989471001 (for kip) and Acc No.: 010110100989471001 (for US dollars). We wish to inform our valued customers to make payments through these bank accounts. For more information call 021 336042, 336040.