



Mr Michael Kleine (left) hands over new school facilities to Ms Pheng Kanyaphim in Huaphan province.

US provides school buildings for Huaphan children

Times Reporters

More than 100 students at Meuangna Lower Secondary School in Xamtay district, Huaphan province, now have a better educational environment after a brand new classroom block and dormitory were built.

The new facilities were supported by the US government at a cost of US\$630,537, according to the US Embassy in Laos.

A handover ceremony for the new facilities took place at the provincial Education and Sports Department.

The event was attended by the United States Deputy Chief of Mission to Laos Mr Michael Kleine, provincial Deputy Governor Ms Pheng Kanyaphim, local authorities and other invited guests.

The buildings contain furniture, toilets, and electrical and plumbing systems to help

accommodate the growing student population.

“Improving education is essential to the development of every country,” Mr Kleine said. “The United States is committed to working in partnership with the government of Laos to provide better educational facilities for students throughout the country.”

The US Deputy Chief of Mission presented the new facilities to the people of Huaphan province on behalf of the American people as a sign of the expanding relationship between the two nations.

In an interview with *Vientiane Times* last week, an official from the provincial Education and Sports Department, Mr Kongsy Xayasong, said the improvements would inspire more children to attend school.

“Better educational facilities will undoubtedly help to develop students’ knowledge and abilities,” he added.

Mr Kongsy said the assistance from the US was a significant contribution to the development of education and the students were very happy to have brand new classrooms.

This support furthers the aims of the National Action Plan for Education for All, which is one of the government’s four priority plans for eliminating poverty by 2020.

But Mr Kongsy said more assistance was needed to further improve school environments in rural areas.

The United States government has been provided humanitarian assistance projects in rural areas of Laos for over 18 years, including schools, medical clinics, irrigation systems and clean water supplies.

Meuangna Lower Secondary School is just one of several humanitarian assistance projects completed over the last year, according to the US Embassy.

Trade union federation eyes int’l support

Times Reporters

The Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) is continuing its cooperation with international organisations to bolster its work in the years ahead.

The 5th Information Sharing and Coordination Meeting took place in Vientiane on Friday with the participation of the LFTU and related organisations to discuss the LFTU’s progress over the past two years.

The meeting took place at the Lao National Radio office and was presided over by the President of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, Mr Pan Noymany, officials from the provinces and representatives of associated organisations.

Mr Pan said “This meeting is important because we are seeking ways to develop the LFTU so that it becomes stronger. We want to make sure that we are protecting the rights and benefits of our members as well as other workers nationwide.”

The meeting reviewed the political, economic and labour situation in Laos.

Also on the agenda was a review of the progress of the LFTU’s partnership with the Trade Union Solidarity Support Organisation and Global Union Federation for 2014-2016 and the key lessons learnt. Areas of cooperation for 2017-2019 and beyond were identified.

Meeting participants

discussed revisions to laws and regulations relating to labour and trade union issues in the past two years.

They were also updated on the results of the 7th LFTU National Congress and the revision of the LFTU’s strategy and structure.

They discussed key issues and challenges and the strategies necessary to achieve the organisation’s five-year strategic plan.

Participants also considered the issues they would like the LFTU to tackle while Laos is the chair of Asean this year and what support the LFTU is looking for from the Trade Union Solidarity Support Organisation and Global Union Federation.

Japan gives boost to UXO clearance

Representatives of the Lao and Japanese governments attend a ceremony for the handover of UXO clearance assistance in Pakxong district, Champassak province.



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The government of Japan has given dormitories and brush cutter machines to UXO Lao for use by the organisation’s staff in clearing ordnance in the provinces of Champassak, Xekong and Saravan.

The donation was made under the Acceleration of UXO Clearance Project for rural development and poverty eradication in the three southern provinces.

Japanese Ambassador to Laos Mr Takeshi Hikihara recently handed over the equipment and facilities to Champassak provincial Governor Dr Bounthong Divixay, who represented the Lao government, as well as provincial authorities from Xekong and Saravan.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Takeshi Hikihara said unexploded ordnance has killed and injured many people over the course of

several decades and has hindered development, while farmers have been able to work the land because of UXO contamination.

The Japanese government began supporting UXO Lao in 1998 and to date has provided assistance worth more than 4,000 million Japanese yen (US\$40 million).

From 2014-2016, Japan has provided four dormitories, four brush cutters and vehicles, and funded operating costs. The dormitories will be used by UXO Lao staff working in the field, while the equipment should help to accelerate the clearance of munitions.

Mr Hikihara said the Standard of Operation for the brush cutters is in the process of approval. Once it is approved it will help UXO Lao to speed up munitions clearance in difficult terrain with a high level of contamination.

Aside from supporting the UXO sector, the Japanese

government also supports health, educational, infrastructure and other development projects in Laos.

Mr Hikihara thanked the Lao government for the long relationship and collaboration between the two countries.

Dr Bounthong expressed his appreciation to the Japanese government for its assistance to Laos.

On behalf of the Lao government and the provinces of Champassak, Xekong and Saravan, he acknowledged receipt of the dormitories and brush cutters generously donated by the Japanese government.

He also expressed the hope that Japan would continue to provide support to Laos.

The two sides held a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the donation, indicating that all of the items provided by Japan are now the responsibility of the Lao government are owned by Laos.

New generator beats power cuts at Mother and Newborn Hospital

Associate Prof. Dr Som Ock Kingsada (fifth left) and Mr Tim Enderlin (fourth right) cut a ribbon at a ceremony to hand over a generator to the Mother and Newborn Hospital in Vientiane.



Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth

Interruptions to the supply of electricity during surgery have been pinpointed as one of the reasons why mothers and newborns die needlessly, according to the Deputy Minister of Health, Associate Prof. Dr Som Ock Kingsada.

The deputy minister was speaking last week at the handover of a generator to the Mother and Newborn Hospital in Vientiane, provided by the Swiss Laos Hospital Project (SLHP) and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).

Also present at the ceremony were SLHP President Dr Urs Lauper and hospital administrative staff.

The Mother and Newborn Hospital carries out about 7,000 surgical procedures a year on expectant and birthing mothers and newborn babies. Electrical interruptions have interfered with a number of surgeries, although precise figures are unavailable.

Associate Prof. Dr Som Ock Kingsada said it was critically important that hospitals have a reliable supply of electricity.

The government had tried to address the problem of irregular power supplies to health centres and hospitals but did not have the necessary resources.

Head of the hospital’s Neonatology International Cooperation Division, Dr Phommady Vetsaphong, said the Mother and Newborn Hospital moved from central Vientiane to Nongphaya village in Xaythany district in 2015.

However, there was no generator in the new building. Hospital Director Prof. Dr Buavanh Sensathith said they were constantly worried that a power outage would affect the delivery of a baby.

The Swiss Embassy’s representative to Laos and SDC’s Regional Director for the Mekong region, Mr Tim Enderlin, said the Swiss Laos Hospital Project was initiated by Dr Urs Lauper and began some 20 years ago with the support of

the Mother and Child Hospital in Vientiane.

Every year, specialised medical equipment is brought from Switzerland to Laos. The project regularly sends teams of experts to Laos to train medical staff here.

The project is supported by a group of Swiss doctors and hospitals, who work with nurses and doctors at the Mother and Newborn and Mahosot hospitals. The Swiss Laos Hospital Project is a private initiative supported by private donations which made the hospital in Nongphaya village possible.

Mr Enderlin said it was the enthusiasm and dedication of Swiss experts, who gave up their holidays to come and work in Laos, that made all the difference in providing quality services to so many mothers and newborn babies all over the country.

“I believe this admirable commitment by individuals and institutions is reason enough for the SDC to step in when the need arises for an emergency backup generator,” he added.

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