



COPE Newsletter March 2015

Latest news

COPE Advisory Board

In March, COPE's Interim Advisory Board held its first meeting. It consists of five people with extensive experience in program management, organizational development, and from the disability sector, and will meet four times during 2015. During this period the advisory board will help COPE establish long term governance structures and support the development of a long term strategic plan. The Interim Advisory Board has a majority of female members, which will also be a benefit for ensuring that women's needs and perspectives are incorporated even better into COPE's coming efforts.



COPE is...

The Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise. We are a local not for profit organisation that provides support to the Government of Laos' physical rehabilitation services throughout the country, focusing on prosthetics and orthotics (P&O) COPE also supports patients who come to the rehabilitation centers. COPE advocates for survivors of bomb accidents and people with disabilities in Laos.

FAST FACTS

37%

Of COPE-supported patients who were fitted with prosthetic devices are bomb survivors.

6513

Visitors to the Visitor Center during the first quarter of 2015!

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COPE Services

P&O field trip to Savannakhet and Pakse

The P&O Adviser and Rehabilitation Adviser visited Savannakhet and Pakse provincial rehabilitation centers in February. These field trips are important opportunities to monitor and reinforce the clinical work, and identify maintenance and technical needs at the centers.



This was the first trip of COPE's new P&O Adviser, Kim Kunthea, to the provinces and a good introduction to the needs and challenges of the Lao rehabilitation sector. "My first visit to the southern part of this beautiful, resourceful and clean country was impressive. I experienced warm hospitality

among the general public and the colleagues and partner staff working in this sector. I witnessed the functioning of the physical rehabilitation centers and the beneficiaries served through these two structures. This was a great time for me to get to know each other and work with the multi-disciplinary team," said Kunthea.

Towards quality standards

A two day workshop was organized in February between COPE's technical support team and the CMR/PRC team of 25 clinicians and technicians from the physiotherapy/occupational therapy and prosthetic/orthotic departments. The workshop, called *Quality standards in the clinical service for lower limb prosthetics* was an important first step towards setting standards and improving quality in the physical rehabilitation services in Lao PDR.



Learning from 3 years of CBM support

CBM, one of COPE's main donors since 2008, organized recently a comprehensive evaluation of the last three years of their support. A multi-disciplinary evaluation

team visited Vientiane and Xieng Khuang in February and conducted a series of in depth interviews with both patients and staff members at the COPE-supported government rehabilitation centers there.

The evaluators' preliminary results showed that the impact of the treatment provided, in particular for patients from rural areas, was significant and had contributed to changing lives and reintegrating people with disabilities into society. It was also clear that the patients would not have been able to access the services without the support from COPE. However, results also indicated that there is room for improvement to ensure that all people with needs receive the necessary long-term quality care. The detailed recommendations will be analyzed and will provide important input for shaping COPE's future efforts.

Sharing regional USAID experiences

In March, COPE's CEO and Program Manager were invited to a Development Partner Exchange meeting at USAID's regional office in Bangkok. This exchange brought together a number of regional organizations receiving USAID support to share their experience and learning. USAID staff members were on hand to answer questions related to grant management and implementation. USAID has funded COPE's support to the physical rehabilitation sector in Laos through a grant from 2011 to 2014 and a new grant that will run from 2014 to 2017.

Patient story

Mr Len or Por Thao Len is 63 years old. He is married with two children and lives in Phonepanao village, Saysetha District, Vientiane Capital. He was fitted with his sixth prosthesis at the Center for Medical Rehabilitation (CMR) with COPE support in January after his previous one was worn out.

In 1973, Len was injured by unexploded ordnance while he was on duty as a soldier in the southern part of Laos. The accident damaged one of his legs so he needed to have his leg amputated in Thailand. He told us before he received the prosthesis that he faced so many difficulties in term of mental health and mobility. However, after he received the artificial leg his life is much better." I am able to move around in more comfort and can take care of myself, so I don't need my wife and children to look after me all the time. Thank you very much to COPE and the people who make donations. This prosthetic leg is changing my life a lot," said Len.



COPE FUNDRAISERS

Child to child support from VIS students

Students from the Global Issues Network club at Vientiane International School have been investigating global issues that affect the local community, focusing on children with disabilities. As part of their work they organized a collection of toys which they donated to COPE.



Birthday present to COPE

Thomas is from Germany and he is one of our supporters. Here Thomas explains his decision to support COPE:

After I arrived in Laos, everything started with a visit in the COPE center. A good friend of mine said that COPE has one of the best exhibitions in Vientiane.

I was deeply moved by the UXO topic and especially by the impact on Lao inhabitants. My family and my friends asked me later, what do you want for your birthday? I said to them that "I wish a leg" and the small

fund-raising campaign was born. I also wrote an article on my Blog tboygoeslaos.com (sorry it's written in German :). After a while, more and more friends and other family members noticed this story and a lot decided to spend some money. So I am very proud that 1200 Euro is the end sum of this fund-raising.

I feel good while supporting the COPE project. The background information you gave me, ensured me that COPE has a good, structured program. So it's worth it to support the whole rehabilitation process of UXO victims through the COPE project.



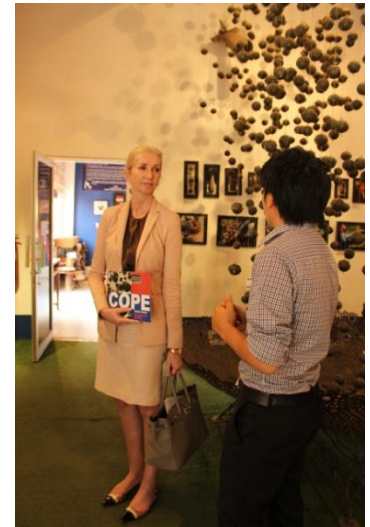
Thank you so much to the VIS students, Thomas and your generous family. People like you are vital for ensuring the necessary support for people with disabilities in Laos.

What's going on
at the Visitor Center?

Special guests galore!

Already in the first quarter of 2015, we have been pleased to welcome a number of special guests and visitors to the center. H.E. Ms Siren Gjerme Eriksen, Norwegian Ambassador based in Hanoi, visited COPE in February, where she received a short

presentation of COPE and got an opportunity to see the [COPE Visitor Centre](#).



We also welcomed the Norwegian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Morten Høglund, to the [COPE Visitor Centre](#) in January. Mr Morten Høglund and his delegation toured the exhibition as well as the Center for Medical Rehabilitation's (CMR) prosthetic and orthotic workshop. During the visit to Laos, an agreement was signed between Norway and Laos which confirms the two countries' partnership on the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.



COPE STAFF

P&O Adviser

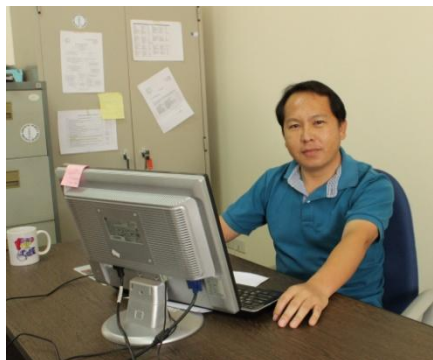
Kim Kunthea started with COPE in the beginning of the year as P&O Adviser. Kunthea is himself a person with disability from childhood. He is a CAT1-trained P&O from Cambodia, qualified from the Cambodian school and later from TATCOT (Tanzania). His past experience includes working with the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and the Ministry of Social Affairs in Cambodia.

“I hope to utilize my knowledge and experience in this field towards the welfare of people with disabilities and to strengthen a regional network of professional collaboration in the ASEAN region,” says Kunthea.



Logistics and Procurement Coordinator

Toulor joined the COPE team in March as Logistics and Procurement Coordinator.



Toulor has significant experience from Catholic Relief Services, World Food Program and Vientiane Technical School. He has a BA from Europe Asia Business College and a Diploma of Agriculture from Vientiane Technical School. He is currently doing a master in business administration at RBAC.

Logistics and Procurement Assistant

Latmanee Chithtarasi started with COPE this year as Logistics and Procurement Assistant. He is from Luang Prabang. He graduated from MCU Chiangmai Thailand. Before COPE he used to work with Medicins Sans Frontiers, Phubia Mining and DFDL Legal & Tax.

“I decided to join COPE because I wanted to be part of COPE’s efforts to help people with disabilities in Laos” said Latmanee.



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Many thanks to our supporters...



ICRC



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

And special thanks to all the individuals, visitors and local businesses who generously support us throughout the year!

COPE

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