



Integrated approach on Victim Assistance

LAO PDR

ENSURING A COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF SURVIVORS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

With the continued support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) continues to support the needs of UXO survivors, persons with disability and other vulnerable groups through the post-conflict situation in Lao PDR.

Description of the problem

Lao PDR is the most heavily bombed country in the world, per capita. Since 1963 there have been over 50,713 reported UXO casualties and over 90% of the people living in the most contaminated provinces live in daily fear of UXO. Rehabilitation services for persons with disability are currently limited and many face difficulty accessing education, healthcare and employment, while many miss out on social activities including cultural events and sports. HI is working at the community, provincial and national levels to improve access to services through advocacy and improving the knowledge of all disability stakeholders on the rights of persons with disability.

Implementing a National Disability Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

During 2017, HI supported the National Committee for the Disabled and Elderly (NCDE) to produce a National Disability Policy, Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the rights and needs of persons living with disabilities are met. To provide a greater understanding of the demographics and a description of the problems facing persons with disability across Lao PDR, HI supported the Lao Statistics Bureau to produce the first Disability Monograph, based on the 2015 National Housing Census. HI continues to support the Lao Statistics Bureau, NCDE and other relevant Government Ministries to disseminate the findings of the Monograph to demonstrate the necessity for the National Disability Policy, Strategy and

Action plan and support its implementation.

During 2019, HI will assist the formation of a Social Statistics Research Committee. Led by the LSB, the committee will focus specifically on persons with disability, including UXO survivors and indirect victims, with an aim to improve services for these individuals.

Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance

HI provides support to UXO victims through its EU-funded UXO project in Houaphan province, which considers a comprehensive approach to mine action through UXO clearance, risk education, victim assistance and advocacy. Compliant with HI's policy of ensuring 'no one is left behind', victim assistance activities in Houaphan province offer the opportunity to assist not only UXO survivors, but other persons with disabilities and their families, who are often the most marginalized and impoverished in their communities. Integrated approach and victim assistance framework training will be provided to all mine action and disability stakeholders within Houaphan province to ensure that the needs of all persons with disability, including UXO survivors and indirect victims, are met.

Increasing awareness and advocacy of disability rights

HI's victim assistance team will build community support groups for persons with disability and their families, including UXO victims, in 44 target villages. Services are often lacking for persons with disability, as provincial and district authorities, as well as the persons with disability themselves, lack awareness of their rights. In partnership with the Lao Disabled Persons Association, HI will provide Disability Rights and Empowerment Training to both provincial/district authorities and community support groups to promote awareness of disability rights and encourage advocacy at the authority and community level. Through the community support groups, HI will identify motivated individuals to become 'Champions with Disability'. The Champions will receive training to participate in workshops and events to promote the rights of persons with disability at both the provincial and national level, as well as providing a positive representation of persons with disability in their community.

Provision of psychosocial support

Persons with disability can often feel ashamed of their disability, suffer with negative body image and feel isolated, leading to psychological stress. Through the community groups, HI will provide psychosocial support to promote positive coping mechanisms and encourage a social network for mental wellbeing. The Champions with Disability will also provide support to the community groups as positive role models for persons living with disability.



From 1963 to 1974, over **270 million** cluster submunitions were dropped on Lao PDR

Over **50,713** UXO casualties



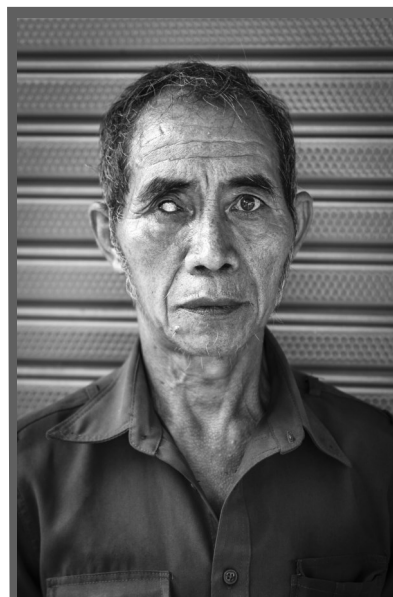
47% of persons with disability

cannot read or write vs. 14% of persons without a disability

25% of persons with disability



stay at home to perform household tasks compared to 5% of those with no disability



Mr. Vanthone Thonginmee, 65 years old

Homethong Village, Houamueng District, Houaphan Province

"It was 27 March 2004. I had gone to the forest to collect bamboo shoots and made a small fire nearby my house to grill them for my family. As I leant over the fire cooking, it suddenly exploded. The UXO had been buried in the ground. My family ran outside and saw me lying there unconscious with open, bleeding wounds. They took me to the hospital where I slowly recovered.

My treatment cost a lot of money and it took years for us to recover. My disabilities are causing me to face many difficulties in my every day life and I cannot generate the same income for my family, as I could before my accident"

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED
THANKS TO:



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