



# COPE Newsletter December 2015

## 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.

**5,838**

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

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## COPE Services

Seminar on Quality standard Indicator for Lower Limb prosthesis

Conducted from November 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, the seminar, hosted by the Center for Medical Rehabilitation, organized by COPE, and sponsored by USAID, is part of the overall effort to improve the quality of prosthetic and orthotic products delivered to people with disabilities in Lao PRD. Ten participants (3 from the Center for Medical Rehabilitation, 1 from each of the 4 Provincial Rehabilitation Centers, and 3 from COPE) met to discuss and agree on quality standards for lower limb prosthetics and develop tools to regularly measure quality of prosthetic devices, time consumption for prosthesis



production, patient oriented

approach and functional outcome of prosthesis provided by CMR and PRCs, in order to compare with the quality standard.

## New legs, new life...

Thavone Kedchanh is 18 years old. He is from Thateng District, Xekong Province. He studies IT and business management at Sikerd training center, and he attended 2015 Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities during October 25<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in Jakarta, Indonesia. He had shown the world his abilities and capacities by winning a gold medal. There were 250 people participated from 25 countries.

When Thavone was 6, he lost both his legs in a driving accident near his village, in Xekong Province. When he arrived at the hospital the doctors advised his parents that they would not be able to save his leg from amputation due to the amount of damage. Thavone spent a month in the 150 Hospital following the amputation. He remembers feeling very depressed at the thought that he would never be able to walk again, never be able

to go back to school and work like everyone else. He was very frustrated not to be able to do the most basic things on his own. Fortunately, the doctors in the Provincial Hospital told his parents about the Center for Medical Rehabilitation, and about COPE's support costs to patients and someone to care for them for the duration of the treatment. He was able to be fitted with two prosthetic legs that same year.



This enabled him to move on, and go back to school.

Thavone is happy and proud that he won a gold medal for Laos at an international competition. He hopes it sends a message of hope to people with disabilities in Laos. "Disable people have a lot to contribute to society, and economic development. We need to make more places accessible for people with disabilities in Laos; we must create more education opportunities for them, like Sikerd Training Center".

## COPE Fundraisers

### Tiffany Holland

Tiffany Holland from Canada celebrated her 44th birthday last month and instead of presents she asked her family

and friends to donate money to COPE. 700 \$ Canadian was collected and handed to COPE on her birthday, 23th November 2015. Thank you so much to Tiffany Holland and your generous family and your friends, people like you are vital for ensuring the necessary support for people with disabilities in Laos.

### Mansfield Secondary College

"Mansfield Secondary College is a small, rural school located in the North-East of Victoria, Australia. Eighteen months ago, a group of 13 students (between 15 and 17 years old) decided to come to Laos as part of a World Challenge expedition. They



worked hard over that 18 month period to fundraise to pay for their own travel as well as have money to donate to some causes. Part of the World Challenge program is a project in a small village and their team worked on the building site of a preschool classroom in Vang Lei, outside of LuangPrabang. Part of the funds went to purchasing educational materials for the local primary school, as well as childrens' books written in Lao and English and produced by Big Brother Mouse.

When they returned to Vientiane, before leaving Laos, the group visited the COPE Visitors Centre. Here they learnt about the impact of the bombing of Laos and the work conducted by COPE in support of the Center for Medical Rehabilitation and four



Provincial Rehabilitation Centers. They said they were impressed with the scope of support that COPE provides to the people of Laos and very moved by the stories told in the displays and documentaries. The students wanted to give a donation to COPE since they could see the hope and positive outcomes that the organization could provide. "We hope that our donation will make a difference to the lives of the people affected by disability in Laos."

What's going on at the Visitor Center?

### Special guests galore

The year 2015 is soon over and during this last quarter of the year we were pleased to welcome a number of special guests and visitors to the center including: The Honourable Dr Andrew Southcott MP, Member for Boothby, South Australia, the Honourable Warren Entsch MP, Member for Leichhardt and Mr Luke Buckmaster. They were accompanied by Ambassador

Williams, Dulce Carandang Simmanivong and

Hannah Lord from the Australian Embassy in Lao PDR.



Ms Jessica Corrie, Global Development Group (GDG) Senior Administration Officer on October 20th. GDG is a Non Government Organization carrying out humanitarian projects worldwide with approved partners, including COPE in Laos. GDG is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and approved by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and reports to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) for International Development enables it to receive tax-deductible donations from Australian tax-payers.



Mr Todd Sorenson, Deputy Director of USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) in Bangkok, accompanied by Mr Curtis Borden,

Representative of USAID RDMA at the US Embassy in Vientiane.



Mr Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, accompanied by Mr Sharad Newpane, Country Programme Specialist, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub. Ms Azusa Kubota, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Lao PDR. Mr Nils Christensen, UXO Portfolio Manager, UNDP Lao PDR.



Mr. MORIYAMA Masahito, State Minister of Justice, Government of Japan and his delegation toured the exhibition as well as the Center for Medical Rehabilitation's prosthetic and orthotic clinic.



## COPE Staff

**COPE International Relation and Quality Assurance Manager**

Isabelle Bouan joined COPE in September 2015 as an International Relation and Quality Assurance Manager.



“When I joined COPE’s team, I had already been living in Laos for three years, so I had of course toured the Visitor Center many times. Working at COPE feels like working with history: our efforts are directed towards alleviating the legacy of war and its terrible consequence for UXO victims; everyday, our energy goes to supporting and building the capacity of the Center for Medical Rehabilitation and Provincial Rehabilitation Centers to help people with disabilities move on; and, together with all the stakeholders from the Rehabilitation Sector, we work to build a future in which people with disability are included in,

and given a chance to contribute to the society they are part of. My diverse professional experience (marketing and communication in the private sector, fundraising and health program management in the humanitarian sector) comes handy, but every day is a new enriching, learning experience, as the past three months with COPE have already shown me”.

**COPE Program Implementation Manager**

Robert Kalka joined COPE in October 2015 as Program Implementation Manager.



“I am delighted to have joined COPE as Program Implementation Manager. It’s a diverse role involving the operations of COPE’s prosthetic and orthotic manufacturing, clinical services and health workforce development programs throughout Laos. My background is in senior management in the not for profit and commercial sectors in Australia. Moving to Vientiane has been our family’s first experience of living overseas. It’s been exciting, fascinating and a great adventure. Outside of work my passions are music and food. I am fortunate to be performing with some talented musicians, and enjoy discovering new flavors at Vientiane’s markets and

restaurants. I am committed to bringing positive change to the lives of people with disabilities in Lao PDR, and feel proud to be part of the COPE team” said Robert.

**Farewell and Thank you!**

Farewell to Stephanie Sparks, COPE Program Manager. She joined COPE in 2013. Stephanie has contributed to building COPE’s organizational capacity so that it becomes a stronger actor on behalf of people with disabilities. Stephanie was also instrumental in writing a grant application for, and securing substantial financial support from the United States Agency for International Development.



Stephanie, we thank you for your hard work and relentless commitment, and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors!

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

Having trouble thinking of a unique gift for loved ones this Christmas or New Year? COPE can help you provide one of the best presents anyone could imagine. By making a donation or buying a donation card (from yourself or on behalf of someone else)

you can help people with disabilities in Laos change their lives through improved mobility. Simply go to our web site <http://copelaos.org/> and follow the links to our donation page. Here you will find links and information about how to donate to COPE. Or go to: <http://copelaos.org/donate.php> We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Many thanks to our supporters...**



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



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