



World Vision

Singapore

Lives Changed Communities Transformed

We couldn't have done it without you.
Thank you!



XIENG NGEUN, LAOS



BACKGROUND

The Lao People's Democratic Republic ("Laos") is one of the least developed countries in the world. Most of its citizens still live in rural areas, where poverty is rampant.

Before World Vision stepped in to help, families in Xieng Ngeun struggled with endemic poverty. The average income per household was 28% below the Laotian poverty line, and low literacy rates prevented the local people from breaking the cycle of poverty. Other problems that plagued the community included the lack of healthcare and sanitation, and food insecurity.

After identifying the urgent needs of the community, World Vision started the Xieng Ngeun Area Development Programme in 2003. Over the years, World Vision was able to form strong partnerships with many local organisations in Xieng Ngeun. This has helped to ensure that World Vision's poverty alleviation programmes can be sustained in the long run as local organisations and communities are motivated, trained and mobilised to continue efforts beyond World Vision's presence in the community.

XIENG NGEUN AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ADP)

TOTAL POPULATION: 10,967
TOTAL CHILDREN: 4,661

 FEMALE: 3,872
GIRLS: 2,134

 MALE: 2,434
BOYS: 2,527

ADP start date: October 2003
ADP end date: February 2017

HOW THE JOURNEY BEGAN

Xieng Nguen ADP consisted of the poorest communities in a country that is economically developing. In response to the needs of families in this area, World Vision started its first development programme in Xieng Nguen in 2003. The project aimed to intervene in key areas such as education, water and sanitation, health and nutrition, economic livelihood and food security.



CLEAN WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE (WASH)

In the past, only about 65% of villagers in Xieng Ngeun had access to safe drinking water. Many had to walk thrice a day just to fetch water. Despite the trek, the water they brought back to their families was still contaminated, increasing the risk of diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases among children. In addition, 92% of people in Xieng Ngeun did not use sanitation facilities such as toilets, increasing the risk of hygiene-related diseases such as diarrhoea.

Through constructing water supply systems in villages, children received clean, safe drinking water all year round. Latrines were also built for villages and sensitisation activities were carried out to educate villagers on the importance of hygiene. Furthermore, villagers were taught to take ownership of the water systems and latrines. They now operate these systems on their own and have set up revolving funds as a sustainable resource pool for maintaining these systems in the years to come.

Now, in 2016, 99.8% of households have gained access to clean water. In addition, 82% of households now have access to hygienic sanitation facilities, up from 8% in earlier years.



As a result of clean water, sanitation and hygiene interventions, the incidence of diarrhoea in children under the age of 5 took a drastic dip – in 2015, 99% of children became diarrhoea-free!

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I used to have to help my mother and older sister carry water from the river. Once we had the water, we had to walk up the steep mountain to reach our house. It was so difficult. Now, I am very happy to have clean water taps near our house. I don't worry about as much water because it is now easy to get.

— NONH
aged 10

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EDUCATION

When World Vision first began the programme in Xieng Ngeun, most villagers were illiterate. The enrolment rate of primary school students was very low. Only 60.2% of children aged 5-18 years old were enrolled in formal education. Furthermore, the quality of education received was very poor. Proper infrastructure was found lacking – schools were made of bamboo and had leaky roofs, few desks and chairs, and no latrines. Families also did not understand the importance of education and often took their children away from school during harvest season to help with working in the fields.

Over time, World Vision worked on increasing enrolment rates and the quality of education. Preschools were built to prepare younger children for formal education

while primary schools were constructed to accommodate more children in the communities. Significantly, in the last 5 years, 3 kindergartens have been built and equipped. For the children of Xieng Ngeun, this was their first exposure to any type of early childhood care and development services. In addition, pre-primary and primary school teachers were trained to improve the quality of teaching in schools. Awareness campaigns were also carried out in villages, coupled with adult literacy classes, to persuade caregivers on the importance of education and encourage families to send their children to school.

By 2016, 99.8% of children have gained access to primary school education and 96% now complete basic education!



On behalf of the teachers and students in this school, I would like to thank World Vision and the government for supporting us in our efforts to improve children's education in our village. Teachers are now better equipped to facilitate learning.

— BOUNPHANH VILAYCHIT
Teacher



HEALTH & NUTRITION

When World Vision first arrived to work in Xieng Ngeun ADP, people in the community had little knowledge about the nutrition. Consequently, plenty of young children were severely malnourished, underweight and had stunted growth. However, after attending World Vision's educational sessions on the nutritional value of different food items, 80% of participating mothers and caregivers demonstrated excellent knowledge of how to provide their families with nutritious food. World Vision also provided essential health supplements (such as iron and Vitamin A pills respectively) to nursing mothers and young children.

In 2006, 42.9% of children under the age of 5 were moderately to severely underweight, and 56.8% of them suffered from stunted growth. However, as of 2016, 97% of all children are of healthy weight.

Another issue that World Vision sought to tackle was the community's lack of access to proper health services. Through supporting health centres and even providing mobile clinics, the community had much better access to healthcare. Additionally, a fund was set up for families facing health emergencies, and villagers were taught how to get to the nearest hospital. To address common health problems, a village medicine store was set up to help families access basic medication.

World Vision also addressed the villagers' lack of knowledge about healthcare. Villagers initially believed that vaccinations made children sick. Consequently, preventable illnesses were prevalent as



Four-year-old Noon and his mother, Mrs. Chin, are waiting their turn to be examined by the nutritionist at a World Vision mobile health clinic. Previously, Mrs. Chin's children had no access to basic healthcare. Now, she makes sure that her children get their routine checkups at the clinic thrice a year!

children did not receive vaccinations. Through dispelling the misconceptions of the villagers, 96% of children have received essential vaccinations. Education programmes and prevention campaigns on major diseases in the area were also conducted in 18 villages. This equipped the villagers with the skills, equipment and knowledge to treat illnesses such as diarrhoea and malaria which were previously life-threatening. As a result, 99% of children were diarrhoea-free in 2016!



ECONOMIC LIVELIHOOD & FOOD SECURITY

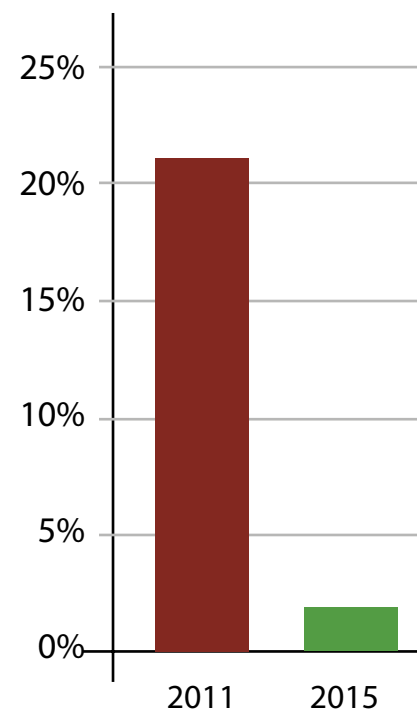
Although the main livelihood source for Xieng Ngeun villagers was farming, most people lacked the knowledge to reap the maximum harvests that their land could produce. Similarly, insufficient knowledge in animal husbandry resulted in the frequent deaths of animals. As a result, farmers had insufficient crops and livestock to feed their families, let alone support their livelihood.

World Vision stepped in to educate the population on more effective farming methods, such as Slope Agriculture Land Techniques (“SALT”). This improved soil quality for the better cultivation of crops. SALT also helped the villagers diversify their crop production by enabling them to grow both vegetables and fruits. Now, 80% of farmers in Xieng Ngeun are trained in sustainable agriculture planning

and are taught cultivation techniques that generate bountiful harvests of the most promising cash crops.

In order to ensure that villagers had sufficient livestock to breed, World Vision also set up an animal raising fund, which loaned farmers money to purchase animals. With sufficient animals to breed, and having been trained by World Vision on the right methods of raising them, some farmers in the ADP have been able to earn as much as an additional \$500 per family every year. This additional income is almost double the average household income of impoverished farmers in 2003.

As a result of livelihood interventions, 91% of households had year-round access to sufficient food in 2016!



Percentage of households struggling with severe poverty has decreased over the years

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My husband and I used to get only 3 to 4 million kip (US\$ 375-500) per year from raising pigs because we only had two to three of them, and did not know how to raise them properly. However, through World Vision’s animal raising fund, we were able to borrow 3,000,000kip (US\$375) to buy four pigs. Last year, we sold sixteen pigs for 22,000,000kip (US\$2,750), while still keeping twelve. This huge boost in income allows us to support our children’s education.

We plan to raise more pigs in the future so that we can continue to pay for our children’s education until they finish secondary school. We dream of seeing our children capable of supporting their own families one day. Thank you World Vision and the government for helping our family and our community.

— PHALY
aged 33

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STORY OF CHANGE

FROM HUNGER TO HOPE

Having a fried egg and sticky rice for lunch puts smiles on the faces of Ning and her younger brother Tony. This had not always been the case - the pair of siblings used to go hungry often.

Ning and Tony's family used to struggle to make ends meet. Although they were poultry farmers, their traditional methods of raising poultry could not prevent their birds from falling sick. As a result, with the loss of a significant portion of their brood, their family income took a toll.

However, what was most significant was the impact on Ning and Tony's health. With not enough money to go around, the children often went hungry and could not expect to have a full three meals a day. According to Thiphaphone, World Vision Laos Health Manager, "Child health is closely linked to family income levels. When families don't have any money, they are often unable to provide a wide variety of nutrients for their children and keep their children in school."

This changed after Ning's grandfather attended training and received seed money from the community revolving fund to purchase chickens, ducks, feeding equipment and vaccines. "After the training, I found that raising poultry is not as hard as I thought. They just need good care," he said.

Ning's mother is also a happy beneficiary of the training programme. With better care of the poultry they owned, she was also able to harvest eggs to supplement her children's diet.

After just one year, the family was able to sell two flocks of chickens, earning about S\$258, and even had 150 birds left. The money the family earned went towards supporting their children's education. More significantly, with the increase in income, they were even able to support Ning's older brother through college.

The two happiest beneficiaries of the programme are surely Ning and Tony. They now have three meals a day, can focus better in school, and have greater hope for the future!



**“Our vision for every child,
life in all its fullness.
Our prayer for every heart,
the will to make it so.”**

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