

Strengthening Cohesive Communities

LAO-WCL-SCC-P03



Champasak Province, Laos



Economic Empowerment

3 Year Project: July 2022 to June 2025

Total Budget: \$90,000



Overview

Our partner is addressing the root causes of socio-economic poverty while working to reduce the risks of trafficking and unsafe migration. Many communities face deep feelings of despair and hopelessness driven by poverty, water and food insecurity, illiteracy, and limited awareness of the dangers of leaving family behind. Economic opportunities are scarce, and cultural norms often exclude women and youth from decision-making and community life. In Phase Four of this integrated development program, our partner is expanding access to clean water, improving community health, strengthening food security, and boosting the economic resilience of the most vulnerable families. They are also providing vocational training and promoting inclusive, community-based leadership and participation.

Objectives



Reduction in unsafe migration

The project achieved a 60% reduction in unsafe migration in eight targeted villages, translating to approximately 1,910 individuals who now have opted for safer, more sustainable livelihoods within their communities rather than risking unsafe migration.



Improved health outcomes

70% of vulnerable households—about 1,850 families—reported better health outcomes from interventions like water filters, latrine construction and health awareness campaigns, leading to a significant reduction in communicable diseases and improved community health resilience.



Increased food security

Through livelihood initiatives, approximately 70% of vulnerable families (around 1,800 households) began earning a consistent monthly income, directly enhancing household food security and access to essential services.



Strong, inclusive community leadership

8 Village Development Committees (VDCs) were initiated, developing and implementing community-led projects and demonstrating improved governance. Training for 56 VDC members led to initiatives like a village bridge, benefiting over 300 residents with better access and infrastructure.

Life change

- **Improved Health Outcomes:** Achieved Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, resulting in significant reductions in malaria outbreaks and diarrhea cases, leading to healthier communities.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Farmers equipped with practical skills for diverse livelihoods, boosting household income and food security through activities like vegetable cultivation and livestock raising.
- **Strengthened Community Cohesion:** Fostered collaboration within Village Development Committees, promoting strategic planning and improved literacy and numeracy, contributing to a more resilient and informed community.



Ms Tou's Story

At 54, Ms Tou, a single mother from a small village in Laos, once avoided farm work, believing it was dirty, exhausting, and poorly paid. However, after receiving agricultural training through our partner, she transformed her life. Starting small, she cultivated cucumbers, pumpkins, eggplants and long beans, quickly discovering local demand exceeded her supply. With improved techniques, she increased her harvests and profits, buying a water pump, reinvesting in crops, and building savings. Once a low-paid factory worker in Thailand, she now proudly says she'd never return—her farm provides steady income, family time, and community benefits. With plans to expand and add a fishpond, Ms Tou is growing not just food, but hope for her family and village.



Hygiene and nutrition training for 680 children in 8 villages. Handwashing stations constructed.

Bouppha's Story

At 36, Bouppha, a devoted mother of two, made the difficult choice to live apart from her children so they could attend secondary school, believing education is their path to a brighter future. Raised in hardship after losing her father, she sacrificed her own university dreams to support her younger sisters, helping her mother sew to make ends meet. When our partner offered vocational sewing training, Bouppha seized the chance, learning advanced techniques and business skills that transformed her home sewing into a small enterprise. With modern equipment provided by the project, she and her mother now produce higher-quality garments, meet larger orders, and earn enough to cover school costs, daily needs, and savings. "You didn't just give me a skill," she says, "you gave me hope, confidence, and a new beginning."

