New centre for children and young people with intellectual disability

A new centre for children and young people with intellectual disability has opened in Vientiane Capital, thanks to the generous support of Caritas Australia.

On 17 February 2012, around 150 people joined to celebrate the opening of the new centre in Ban Nong Khor. Children and young people with intellectual disability, their parents, teachers, LDPA members, supporters, donors, monks and government officials enjoyed a day of celebration. Games and music entertained children and young people, whilst parents and teachers made the most of the opportunity to network and socialise with one another. There was also food and dancing for all to enjoy.

The new centre replaces an old facility located adjacent to Chau Anouvong Stadium in central Vientiane Capital. Mr Kamsone Lokham, Project Manager said the old facility was very basic and was not adequate given the special needs of intellectual disabled children and young people. The new centre, however, offers plenty of space, a massive garden, kitchen facilities and multiple bathrooms.

“We are extremely grateful for the support given by Caritas Australia which has improved the lives of everyone involved in this project. We thank Caritas Australia for their generous support and we are excited about continuing to work together in the future”, Mr Kampsone said.

Caritas Australia’s support of this new centre has strengthened its partnership with the LDPA. In the coming months Caritas Australia will provide additional support through behaviour and communication management, disability rights and equality training for teachers and parents of children and young people with intellectual disability. There are also plans to develop life skills training at the new centre to teach children and young people basic living skills. Next month, the first of a series of parent support sessions will be held in Vientiane Capital. This will offer parents of intellectually disabled children and young people with support and the opportunity to come together and share experiences.

The LDPA would like to thank Caritas Australia for their ongoing support.

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From your LDPA President
It has been a busy start to 2012 for the LDPA. We have been working hard on existing projects and have many new and exciting projects in the pipeline. With this comes opportunities for you as members to join together and participate in new initiatives designed to improve your lives. We are looking forward to working towards equality for all with our new and existing project partners with the support of our provincial offices – Mr Bounvien Louangyoth.

A reminder we are now online!
The LDPA has a new website! You can check it out at www.ldpa.org.la. We are also now on Facebook. Type “The Lao Disabled People’s Association” into the Facebook search page found at www.facebook.com or follow the link on the “Contact Us” page of the LDPA website. We invite you to share your ideas and stories and we welcome your comments and suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you!
**International Women’s Day celebrations**

International Women’s Day is celebrated across the world on 8 March each year. The day celebrates the vital role women play in our communities but recognises that significant barriers to achieving women’s equality exist. The LDPA’s Deaf Unit celebrated the occasion by organising an event to raise awareness of this special day. Many women, most who were deaf, gathered for lunch, to make handicrafts and share stories. The day was a huge success. Well done LDPA Deaf Unit!

**Meet a member – Ms Phanita Maiphone**

How long have you been an LDPA member? I have been a member of the LDPA for 5 years.


What is your disability? I am deaf. When I was 2 years old, I got a fever and a rash so my parents took me to the hospital. The doctor gave me lots and lots of medicines. After that, my hearing slowly disappeared.

Do you work, if so what work do you do? I work within the LDPA’s Deaf Unit which is part of the LDPA. I am Deputy Head of this Unit and I am responsible for finance/accounting.

What is your favourite activity? I love my work. I like organising vocational and sign language training for deaf people across Lao PDR.

What are your hopes for the future? I want to see the Lao Association of Deaf established so that we can promote and encourage deaf people around the country to pursue education and employment opportunities. I also want to show society that deaf people make valuable contributions to society.

We would like to thank Ms Phanita for sharing her story with us. We would also like to thank Ms Lattana Sengdala for assisting us with sign language translation.

**Sporting success in Luang Prabang**

In the previous issue of Ability we told you about the first ever national sporting event for people with disability held in Luang Prabang. The event was a great success with over 200 people in attendance. The event showcased five sports - sitting volleyball, flying disc, wheelchair basketball, badminton and petanque with competition offered in badminton and petanque. Placegetters were:

Badminton: First – Physical Rehabilitation Centre (Vientiane Province), Second – Sainyabuli Province, Third – Vientiane Province.


The LDPA congratulates everyone who participated and thanks our supporters, Asian Disabled People for Development.

**Are you looking for a job?**

In the July 2011 issue of Ability we told you that the LDPA has an employment service for people with disability. If you are looking for a job, and would like to register your interest, please contact the LEED (Linking Employers and Employees with Disability) project team at the LDPA head office.

**Do you have something to say? Contact us!**

The LDPA is your voice and we would love to hear from you! Please send us your feedback, comments and stories or visit us at the address below. Alternatively you can contact your provincial cell secretary or email Mr Vilaos Khodmontry, Media Coordinator, vilaos.khodmontry@hotmail.com.