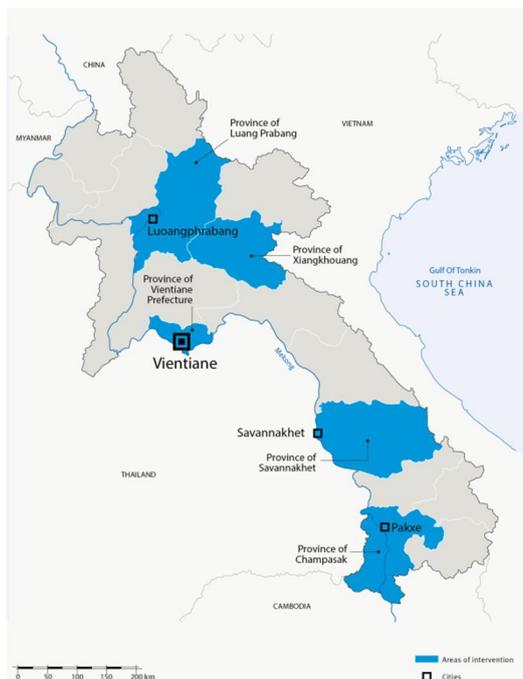




Laos



**MANDATE**

HI aims to build the capacities of, and collaboration between, institutions in Laos and civil society to tackle the leading causes of disability. This entails promoting and advancing the rights of people with disabilities. The organisation also works to reduce the threat from explosive remnants of war<sup>1</sup>, including cluster munitions, which continue to pollute the country after more than 40 years.

**SITUATION**

Laos continues to be among the 'Least Developed Countries'. The country faces significant challenges to reduce the high level of malnutrition and food insecurity. Access to health facilities in rural areas remains weak and limited and health personnel is sorely lacking in training. There is still a lack of accurate data about the estimated total number of people with disabilities.

Lao PDR is known as the world's most heavily contaminated nation from cluster munitions per capita.

During the Vietnam war, between 1964 and 1973, the United States dropped more than 270 million cluster munitions over Laos, even though the country was not part of the conflict. An estimated 80 million cluster munitions did not explode on impact, and currently lie dormant in rice fields, waterways and on roads, posing a daily threat to the lives of civilians in 15 of the country's 17 provinces.

Although the Vietnam war ended nearly 40 years ago, the conflict continues to maim and kill innocent people to this day. This is the daily reality shared by thousands of communities, who very often live in remote areas of Laos.

Since 1964, more than 50,000 people have been killed or injured in accidents caused by explosive remnants of war, around half of whom died in peace time. Despite a reduction of number of victims per year in the last 5 years, these weapons still claim in average 40-50 persons each year. This is made all the more unacceptable by the fact that the main victims of these weapons are children.

**INITIAL ACTIONS**

HI has been active in Laos since 1983, with a few interruptions. Initially, the organisation's teams helped the victims of cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war by setting up orthopaedic-fitting workshops to produce and fit prostheses. Over the years, the organisation has also worked in the fields of rehabilitation, rural development, HIV/AIDS prevention, and the economic and social inclusion of people with disabilities.

It has now expanded the scope of its actions to include other activities, including the prevention and early detection of disability in children, rehabilitation, road safety, and support for disabled people's organisations, and continues to conduct projects to promote the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities.

Since 1996, HI has placed a particular emphasis on the fight against cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war by clearing contaminated land<sup>2</sup>, destroying these weapons and helping to prevent accidents involving civilians. The international Ban Advocates Network initiated by HI in 2007, a network of victims' spokespersons, including a Lao group formed in 2010, was closed in March 2015.

**KEY DATA**

Human development index (HDI)*	141/188 classified countries
Gross National Income per capita * (PPA\$)	4,680 \$ per annum
Surface area**	236,800 sq.km
Population**	6,9 million inhabitants
Life expectancy*	66.2 years

<b>Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (CRPD)</b>	Ratified: 25/09/2009
<b>Convention on cluster munitions (Oslo)</b>	Ratified : 18/03/2009
<b>Mine ban treaty (Ottawa)</b>	State not party

\*UNDP: 2015 human development report

\*\* UNSD 2015

**STAFF**

- National staff: 134
- Expatriate staff: 6

<sup>1</sup> The term "explosive remnants of war" refers to various types of munitions equipped with explosive charges used during a conflict, such as grenades, shells, rockets or cluster munitions, which may still be active and present a danger to people's lives after a conflict has ended. Civilians are the main victims of this type of weapon.

<sup>2</sup> Clearance consists in identifying and destroying mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.



## Early Childhood Development

### GOAL

Promoting continuum prevention-intervention-inclusion in order to reduce impairments in infants and young children and to improve the physical or social environment enabling their full participation.

### METHOD

HI supports Children's Hospital in Vientiane to launch a pilot programme including early diagnosis, referral to specialist services provided by the Centre of Medical Rehabilitation and the setting up of a child development clinic. Our operations consist in:

- Setting up and piloting a child disability early detection system in partnership with the children's hospital in Vientiane
- Providing support to a child development unit and basic rehabilitation care to children with disabilities
- Developing and piloting systems for referral to paediatric rehabilitation services
- Partnership with mother and child programmes to support disability inclusion into their interventions. In 2016, HI is partnering with Save the Children International to assess the level of disability inclusion of health services in Nan district, Luang Prabang province.
- Initiation of a participatory approach to disability prevention

### TYPE OF INTERVENTION

<b>Directly with populations :</b>		<b>Through partners :</b>		
Service or care : No	Distribution : No	Technical support : Yes	Donation of equipment : Yes	Financial support : Yes

### BENEFICIARIES

Children and adults with disabilities and their families, communities and health workers:

- 15,000 new-borns and infants will benefit from improved screening services.
- 700 new-borns and children with impairments/disabilities will receive early childhood development health and rehabilitation services to remove and/or reduce the impact of impairments.
- Families of children with impairments/disabilities will benefit from awareness sessions, training and/or support group activities. (100 persons).

### PARTNERS

- Children's hospital in Vientiane
- Mahosot Hospital
- Maternal & new born hospital
- The Centre of medical rehabilitation
- The Ministry of Health
- Active NGOs in the field of maternal and child health

### LOCATION

Vientiane Capital and provinces according to partnerships

### FINANCING

Financing secured until :	31/12/2018
Extension (subject to funding) for another year at least :	Yes



## Functional rehabilitation

### GOAL

Improving the functional rehabilitation sector in Laos to better meet the needs of people with disabilities by implementing clear policies, developing a more effective training programme, and setting up a management system.

### METHOD

The project will focus on three key elements of the rehabilitation system: implementing a clear national framework by developing a national rehabilitation strategic action plan and corresponding guidelines; providing the rehabilitation sector with trained and recognised professionals; enhancing service management to ensure people are able to access quality and sustainable services. The combination of these three elements will more effectively meet the needs of people with disabilities. Our operations consist in:

- Initiating a national rehabilitation task force , and 5 sub task forces to improve overall coordination and monitoring of the sector
- Helping the Ministry of Health draw up a strategic action plan on rehabilitation and inclusive health
- Collect lessons learnt and good practices from past experiences to help identifying a community-based rehabilitation model for Laos, and support the identification of relevant community based rehabilitation approach for Laos.
- Helping the Medical Technologies Faculty to train physiotherapists
- Supporting the establishment of rehabilitation professionals
- Implementing a rehabilitation management system in the country's five rehabilitation services

**TYPE OF INTERVENTION**

<b>Directly with populations :</b>		<b>Through partners:</b>		
Service or care : No	Distribution : No	Technical support : Yes	Donation of equipment : Yes	Financial support : Yes

**BENEFICIARIES**

People with disabilities receiving rehabilitation services:

- The 31 staff of the Center for medical rehabilitation and the 63 staff of the provincial rehabilitation centers will benefit from awareness workshops for the dissemination of the national disability inclusive health and rehabilitation strategy.
- 50 physiotherapists will benefit from the implementation of continuing professional development (CDP) training modules
- 5.000 patients visiting rehabilitation centers, their families and their communities.

**PARTNERS**

- The Centre of medical rehabilitation and provincial rehabilitation centers
- The Faculty of medical technology
- The Ministry of Health

**LOCATION**

Capital Vientiane and Savannakhet, Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang and Champassak provinces.

**FINANCING**

Financing secured until :	31/12/2018
Extension (subject to funding) for another year at least :	Yes



**Support to disabled people’s organisations**

**GOAL**

Building the capacities of Laotian disabled people’s organisations, the government and development operators to promote an inclusive society.

**METHOD**

The programme will provide support to key government and civil society operators in the field of disability and development to build their capacities and improve coordination. The operation will also support actions designed to assess the situation of people with disabilities and to promote policy development recommendations. Lastly, the programme will continue to conduct general awareness-raising actions on the situation and rights of people with disabilities in Laos. Our operations consist in:

- Providing support to the national authorities to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>3</sup> in Laos and to coordinate the disability sector in Laos
- Providing support to the National Committee for Disabled People and Elderly to draw up a national disability policy, strategy and action plan
- Enhancing the organisational skills of disabled people’s organisations and support their engagement in policy dialogue
- Support the Lao Disabled People Association to provide quality training on the rights of people with disabilities and equality at every level of society
- Support disabled people organisations to implement projects to promote inclusive development through a small grant mechanism
- Developing awareness-raising campaigns on the rights of people with disabilities in the media
- Assisting village authorities and community based organisations to promote the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in community life
- Helping development operators take an inclusive approach to their programmes
- Gathering good practices for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the use of these good practices to influence national policies.

**TYPE OF INTERVENTION**

<b>Directly with populations :</b>		<b>Through partners :</b>		
Service or care : No	Distribution : Yes	Technical support : Yes	Donation of equipment : Yes	Financial support : Yes

**BENEFICIARIES**

Associations of disabled persons and persons with disabilities

**PARTNERS:**

The Lao Disabled People’s Association (LDPA), main implementing partner.  
The National Committee for the Disabled People and the Elderly (NCDE), official partner of the government.

**LOCATION :**

Capital Vientiane, provinces of Savannakhet and Champassak

<sup>3</sup> The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**FINANCING**

Financing secured until :	31/12/2018
Extension (subject to funding) for another year at least :	Yes



**Economic Inclusion**

**OBJECTIVE**

The project aims to break down the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing an income.

**METHOD**

The project is supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment. It is designed to support people with disabilities wishing to set up their own business. They are given personalised assistance to get their business up and running, including basic training on running a microbusiness, and access to technical training and/or credit. They also benefit from a start-up pack to buy the equipment they need for their business. At the end of June 2016, the project in the UXO affected districts of Nong and Sepone, Savannakhet province, will end. In May 2016, the project is extended to Kaysone Phomvihane district, Savannakhet province, and Pakse district in Champassak Province.

**TYPE OF INTERVENTION**

<b>Directly with populations :</b>		<b>Through partners :</b>		
Service or care : yes	Distribution :Yes	Technical support : No	Donation of equipment : No	Financial support :No

**BENEFICIARIES**

Persons with disabilities, work networks, communities

**PARTNERS**

The Lao Disabled People's Association (LDPA) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

**LOCATION**

The provinces of Champassak and Savannakhet

**FINANCING**

Financing secured until :	30/04/2017
Extension (subject to funding) for another year at least :	Yes



**Survey and land release**

**GOAL**

Reduce the number of victims of cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and increase opportunities of development in communities and families.

**METHOD**

- In 1996, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, HI conducted an initial national study on the socio-economic impact of unexploded devices, which covers more than two thirds of Laotian territory. The exact extent of contamination in the country is unknown, but a study by HI in 1997 estimated that about 87 000 km<sup>2</sup> of land were contaminated in the country (about 37% of Laotian territory).
- Since then, HI has conducted actions in Laos to reduce the threat from these weapons and their effects. The organization deploys every day nearly 160 people (surveyors, deminers, community outreach team) including 6 expatriates, for the implementation of survey and land release (clearance) actions and risk education (prevention) in the four most affected districts of Savannakhet province: Sepon, Nong, Villabully and Phine. These four districts are considered to be poor and are given high priority in the national socio-economic development plan.
- HI initially sends a Non-Technical Survey Team, consisting of a Team Leader (a trained Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) operator, level 2) and a EOD operator (level 1) to talk to the civilian population and gather evidence about the possible presence of cluster munitions or explosive remnants of war (ERW), to identify and mark ERW found by the community, and to assess the priority development projects in communities and for local authorities (location of new school or extension of a rice field, for example). At the same time, a risk education officer also visits the village to deliver a risk awareness session, to highlight the risks posed by the presence of ERW in the community. To reduce the threat, an emergency response team (Roving Team) immediately destroys all unexploded ordnance found during the surveys or directly reported by the communities through HI hotline.

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- The next step is to send a technical survey team where evidence of cluster munitions was found in order to assess the contamination in the area and define Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHAs). These CHAs are the delimited areas where clearance must take place to remove all threat. This process of Non-Technical and Technical Surveys is a new evidenced based strategy to obtain a mapping of contamination in Lao PDR and prioritize clearance activities.
- Finally, HI deploys a clearance team where the contamination of cluster munitions was defined and where the communities plan to implement a development project in order to fully remove all explosive remnants of war and to hand over a safe land to communities.
- In total, one Non-Technical Survey team, one roving team and nine deminers teams (trained for both technical survey and clearance) from HI act to delineate areas of research, to destroy explosive remnants of war identified and to clear land in a development project area.

These teams work closely with the National Regulatory Authority for UXO and mines (NRA), part of the Ministry of Defense of Laos, with additional coordination with provincial and district authorities in Savannakhet.

The organisation conducts its clearance operations in partnership with development projects run by different partners: district authorities, the Poverty Reduction Fund and the German NGO Welt Hunger Hilfe, also livelihood activities section of victim assistance project implemented by the organisation.

### TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Directly with populations :		Through partners :		
Service or care : yes	Distribution :No	Technical support : No	Donation of equipment : No	Financial support :Yes

### BENEFICIARIES

Rural populations in the districts of Sepon, Nong, Villabully and Phine (183,000 people) along with various ethnic groups (Mungkhong, Ta Oi and Phu Tai) who live in the mountains.

### RESULTS

Since 2006, HI's demining teams have cleared more than 3,500,000 sq.m. of land and destroyed some 24,000 explosive remnants of war (ERW). Some 5,000 ERW were destroyed in 2015.

### PARTNERS

Collaboration with the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) and other stakeholders also involved in clearance in Laos:

- International NGOs such as MAG, NPA, HALO TRUST, World Education
- National stakeholders, such as the Army, COPE LDPA and UXO Laos
- The Poverty Reduction Fund
- The Ministry of Education and Sport

### LOCATION

The four districts worst affected by unexploded devices: Sepon, Nong, Villabully and Phine in the province of Savannakhet.

### FINANCING

Financing secured until :	31/12/2017
Extension (subject to funding) for another year at least :	Yes



## Mines and ERW risk education

### OBJECTIVE

Reducing the number of accidents caused by mines and explosive remnants of war and their victims in Laos.

### METHOD

In parallel to its weapons clearance activities, HI also helps reduce risky behaviour and reduce the number of accidents by holding prevention sessions in villages to raise the awareness of communities on the threats posed by UXO. The organisation's messages are clear and straightforward and teach people what to do when they come across unknown objects that could be explosive remnants of war (ERW). When the head of the village alerts HI to the presence of a suspicious object, its teams travel to the area to neutralise it.

Messages and means of delivering risk education are adapted to different population groups (men, women, children) and repeated over time to improve the knowledge of people at risk, and reactions to have. These activities may be focus groups, interventions in schools and screenings of educational films.

After raising the population's awareness of the risk from explosive remnants of war, HI has noted positive changes in the attitudes and practices of communities, leading to a reduction in the number of fatal accidents. This prevention activity benefits from the support of national and local government initiatives.

In addition to clearance and risk education, HI teams travel to villages to obtain information on suspicious objects and possibly accidents in the area. These activities help to achieve a more accurate estimate of the actual contamination of the territory.

**TYPE OF INTERVENTION**

Directly with <b>populations</b> :		Through <b>partners</b> :		
Service or care : <b>yes</b>	Distribution : <b>No</b>	Technical support : <b>No</b>	Donation of equipment : <b>No</b>	Financial support : <b>No</b>

**BENEFICIARIES**

People exposed to explosive remnants of war, local authorities and development operators.

**PARTNERS**

- The National Regulatory Authority (NRA)
- The Ministry of Education and Sport
- Local authorities in districts
- Government authorities

**LOCATION**

The four districts worst affected by unexploded devices: Sepon, Nong, Villabully and Phine in the province of Savannakhet.

**FINANCING**

Financing secured until :	<b>31/12/2017</b>
Extension (subject to funding) for another year at least :	<b>Yes</b>

## MAIN FUNDING BODIES

<p><b>French Development Agency</b></p> 	<p><b>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway</b></p>  <p><b>NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS</b></p>	<p><b>Development General Direction of Belgian government</b></p> 
<p><b>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg</b></p> 	<p><b>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands</b></p> 	<p><b>The European Union</b></p> 
<p><b>TEAM project</b></p> 	<p><b>The State Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</b></p>  <p><b>Australian Government</b> <b>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</b></p>	