

AFESIP LAOS NEWSLETTER

Acting For Women in Distressing Circumstances

APRIL-JUNE 2010

JOIN US IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN IN LAOS



EDITORIAL

"During the second phase of AFESIP's project to combat human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Lao PDR (2009-2012), predominantly supported by ANESVAD Foundation, the main objective is quality development of all our services. In this perspective, AFESIP Lao PDR was happy to welcome the technical support from its founder Mrs. Somaly Mam, her foundation and team of senior staff from AFESIP Cambodia during a mission to Lao PDR in May 2010 held in Savannakhet. With the financial support of the Somaly Mam Foundation, AFESIP Lao PDR and AFESIP Cambodia had the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges in order to provide the best services to our beneficiaries both during recovery and reintegration.

As AFESIP Lao PDR strives to improve its core services, some organisational restructuring has occurred. For example, the AFESIP reintegration team will be strengthened with a new micro-enterprise and marketing officer in addition to a vocational training officer; and the AFESIP outreach team has become a department of its own within the AFESIP structure and will work on new prevention activities in the communities at risk of trafficking.

Inspired by the Cambodian association of survivors, Voices for Change (supported by the Somaly Mam Foundation), the new Prime Minister's Decree on Lao local associations could also soon see the emergence of a local non-profit association of former victims to give a voice to Lao survivors, with the support of AFESIP Lao PDR. Residents of the AFESIP shelters and AFESIP staff showed great enthusiasm for this new perspective which brings new hope to ensure that victim's needs and rights are to be fulfilled in the future."

Dr. Didier BERTRAND, Country Director of AFESIP Laos

AFESIP LATEST NEWS



AFESIP's Art Therapy Exhibition raises awareness on the psychological consequences of victims of Human Trafficking

Acting For Women in Distressing Circumstances presented the "Art to Healing" exhibition from 1st to 7th of June 2010 at Maison de la Culture Ban Naxay, in Vientiane, assembling paintings and sculptures made by AFESIP residents, former victims of human trafficking, during Art Therapy sessions together with two experienced psychologists in this domain, Dr. Peg LeVine and Ms. Lydia Tan. For the first time in Laos, the artworks of former victims of Human Trafficking were exposed for a public event and AFESIP is proud to share with you this success in our fight against Human Trafficking for sexual exploitation in Laos.

What is AFESIP Laos' Art Therapy project?

AFESIP started the project *"Innovative awareness-raising of human trafficking for sexual exploitation on victims in Laos: using Art Therapy to expose the psychological consequences"* in July 2009 with the support of the US Embassy in Lao PDR. Between July 2009 and June 2010, four Art Therapy workshops with victims from AFESIP rehabilitation centres have been organised. This exhibition was the final step of the project.



Art Therapy: revealing the psychological trauma of trafficking to victims

One of the AFESIP project's key objectives is to rehabilitate and develop the mental health of former victims of Human Trafficking. AFESIP upholds an innovative, victim-centred approach to confront the psychological consequences of trafficking on victims; in a region and country where verbal expression of trauma is culturally withdrawn.





Art Therapy: the victims' perspective to raise awareness of the psychological consequences of trafficking

Driven by its objective for an innovative, victim-centred approach, AFESIP investigates alternative psychological therapies which are often unexplored in Laos, such as Art Therapy. In addition, as the only specialised organisation in Laos providing rehabilitation support to victims of human trafficking, AFESIP is able to access and assess the psychological impact which human trafficking for sexual exploitation has on victims. This position gives AFESIP the unique ability to raise awareness of the

trauma suffered by victims in Laos; from the victims' perspective. As discussed, Art Therapy promotes the psychological healing of trafficking victims by allowing them to transform their narratives into visual expressions through outlets like drawing, painting and sculpture. What results from this therapy are personal, *visual* expressions of the consequences of trafficking. AFESIP interprets this artwork as a powerful visual tool to expose the consequences of human trafficking and sexual exploitation to public audiences.

Training the trainers: making Art Therapy a sustainable technique for treating the psychological consequences of trafficking:

To expand the understanding and capacity of AFESIP's social work team, and to build on their ability to address the various psychological responses of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in Laos, the project proposed to train AFESIP social workers to allow them to engage in ongoing, sustainable art therapy techniques.

AFESIP hopes this project has not only empowered victims by giving them the opportunity to share their experiences and contribute to awareness raising, but also anticipated the impact these activities will have on public audiences in response to the consequences of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Laos - from a victim's perspective.



A SURVIVOR'S STORY

Kham was only 16 years old when she was tricked into a situation of sexual exploitation by a member of an organised trafficking network. Living with her family in Luang Prabang province, Kham was approached by a woman offering her work selling clothes and beverages in her store in Savannakhet. The woman convinced Kham and her parents that she would earn a good salary and be well taken care of. Three days later, Kham met with the woman at the local bus station before being driven to Savannakhet with two other girls to commence her new job. However, when arriving in Savannakhet, it became clear that the woman's shop was not selling clothing to its customers, but selling sex; the woman had travelled to Luang Prabang to recruit new girls to work in her Beer shop. This was a regular recruitment procedure for the woman, who had deceived and trafficked 2 other Lao young women to work as service women at the time Kham was working. The woman threatened to call the police if Kham didn't do as she was told; Kham was forced into prostitution.

She didn't know that she had the right to leave, and she didn't know how to find help, she couldn't earn enough money to leave the place. After been sexually exploited in the Beer Bar for 3 months, Kham and her 12 years old friend Chan finally escaped. The girls went to the Provincial Department of Labour and Social Welfare who referred them to AFESIP for help.

Kham and Chan were rehabilitated in AFESIP's Vientiane centre before beginning vocational training at AFESIP's Social Enterprise beauty shop, where their skills quickly developed. After being reintegrated back to Luang Prabang province to be with her family, Kham was employed as a beautician in a large resort where she receives a good salary, works under fair conditions and keeps in close contact with AFESIP. Chan is reintegrated and run a income generating activity as a beautician in her community.



AFESIP LAOS ACTIVITIES

• Outreach and Prevention: dissemination of information to groups at risk



Through outreach activities, the social work team together with peer educators regularly visits women in the entertainment sector, transportation areas (such as bus stations and boat piers) and villages at risk. The objectives are to distribute leaflets and information on prevention of trafficking and sexual exploitation, to protect and advise service women and offer alternative employment opportunities, to gather information on high risk areas, to distribute hygiene materials.

• Rehabilitation: new sports equipments in Savannakhet's rehabilitation centre!



Thanks to the Australian Direct Aid Program for the project *Sports and recreational facilities for AFESIP rehabilitation centre for victims of human trafficking in Savannakhet*, Savannakhet's rehabilitation centre has achieved the building of new sports structures for the residents of the shelter. A Badminton field, a basketball installation and various sports equipments are now available allowing the residents during their stay in AFESIP shelter to enjoy various sport activities and team games.

• Reintegration: a "starting kit" for a new life



In order to facilitate the reintegration of victims into their communities through sustainable financial independence after the rehabilitation process, AFESIP provides a "business starting kit" either in kind (stock for micro-business) or in cash (through micro-credit), utilized as a source of income to avoid re-trafficking. AFESIP also searches for employment opportunities for women and girls; one of AFESIP initiatives in this field is the establishment of social enterprises (fair trade businesses), which provide sustainable employment for ex-residents.

• Legal support and Advocacy: Information sessions for Bar Owners and Legal Trainings for Lao Authorities



As part of AFESIP's new advocacy strategy to combat the causes of Human Trafficking in Laos, AFESIP Legal and Communication teams have been working together to put in place Legal Information sessions to raise awareness on Trafficking in Persons, CSEC, Women, Children and Victim's rights under Lao Law. The target groups of these legal sessions are current Bar Owners and relevant authorities in charge of enforcing Lao Laws on Human Trafficking. A newly designed sticker has been tested and received feedback during those sessions. It is aimed at being distributed and stuck in Bars to prevent Commercial and Sexual exploitation of Children in Lao PDR.

AFESIP ACTIVITIES KEY FIGURES

(January-June 2010)

Outreach, Rehabilitation, Reintegration

- **338** entertainment venues were visited by AFESIP outreach team:
- **2040** girls were reached by the Outreach team:
- **26 314** hygiene materials were distributed:
- **70%** of service women visited received an AFESIP "Champa" emergency card
- **44** girls were rescued from the entertainment sector
- **21 residents** were sheltered at AFESIP rehabilitation centre in Vientiane, **26 residents** in Savannakhet (June)
- **59 girls** were followed-up during Vocational Training
- **38** girls were reintegrated

Legal activity

- AFESIP Legal department is currently supporting **10 cases involving 20 former victims** in their path to Justice
- **1 Trafficker** condemned to jail for the first time in February 2010
- **2 case analysis workshops, 1 legal training** on law enforcement, **3 provincial legal workshops, monthly coordination meetings** were organized by AFESIP legal department for Lao authorities and police in the first semester of 2010



NEWS FROM AFESIP SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: OPENING OF THE NEW LIFE HANDICRAFT SHOP IN VIENTIANE



AFESIP and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) opened a common shop on 25th of June 2010 called **New Life Handicraft at the 450th Market in Vientiane Capital** on Kounbouleum Road. *New Life Handicraft* is a project run by AFESIP social enterprise *Fair Beauty* and UNODC *Somsagna Center* project and *Alternative Development* projects in Northern Laos. Proceeds from the sales are reinvested into alternative income generating activities for vulnerable groups.

Fair Beauty is the name of AFESIP Social Enterprise created in 2007. It is a training and income generating activity that supports victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation to return to a normal life through a sustainable reintegration process (financial independence). *Fair Beauty Organic Cosmetics* is a new range of organic beauty products created in partnership with the Lao Organic Product Promotion Association (LOPPA) and AFESIP Social Enterprise to empower Nature, Lao women and Consumers from all over the world. Organic Bergamot Shampoo, a wide range of Organic soaps and Organic Massage oils are the different Fair Beauty Cosmetics available at the *New Life Handicraft* shop.

By giving women job opportunities in Fair Trade conditions, AFESIP *Fair Beauty* can support their economic, social and psychological empowerment to foster sustainable independence. **AFESIP Social enterprise Fair Beauty has now 3 branches established and currently in operation:** production and sale of Fair Beauty organic cosmetics products, in cooperation with the Lao Organic Product Promotion Association (LOPPA), production of Handicraft: handmade Champa flowers in Lotus Fibers, gift cards and frames in Mulberry Paper, and a Beauty training salon in Vientiane Capital next to Wat Simuang.



For any enquiries concerning Fair Beauty products from AFESIP Social Enterprise, Please contact: socialenterprise@afesiplaos.org

JOIN THE FIGHT!

AFESIP Laos needs your support!

To make an online donation: www.afesiplaos.org or www.ammado.com
We receive in-kind donations such as clothes, IT equipments, beauty shop equipments, furniture, household linen etc.
Please contact us if you want to make an in-kind donation.

For any information on AFESIP Laos project:
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AFESIP ONLINE

AFESIP Laos is now also on Facebook and Twitter! Become a fan or a follower:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Vientiane/AFESIP-Laos/219762221380> and
<http://twitter.com/AFESIPLaos>
Visit our pictures gallery on Picasa Web Albums: <http://picasaweb.google.com/afesip.laos>

THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS, AFESIP IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT SINCE 2006:

266 GIRLS AND WOMEN
ARE FOLLOWED UP BY AFESIP LAOS
202 GIRLS AND WOMEN
WERE RESCUED FROM THE ENTERTAINEMENT SECTOR IN LAOS
247 GIRLS AND WOMEN
WERE TAKEN IN BY AFESIP IN THE REHABILITATION CENTRES
122 GIRLS AND WOMEN
ARE REINTEGRATED AFTER RECEIVING VOCATIONAL TRAINING THROUGH AFESIP

AFESIP's combat is mainly supported by ANESVAD, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, Manos Unidas.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

