

# STICKY RICE MINISTRY

Lao Attached Field Newsletter

April 2015

## You Give Them Something to Eat



Boy with a sticky rice container during a Buddhist Alms Collection round

Have you ever fasted in order that you may give that meal to someone who is hungry? I must admit that when I was young I used to be a temple boy. A temple boy in Laos, at least during my time in 1970s, totally relied on the monks' leftovers. On a good day, the monks might have some leftovers and so we, temple boys, could have something to eat. Unfortunately, often there was no leftovers and we went to bed with empty stomach. In Isaiah 58:6-7 I believe God cares about someone like me..

Some of you used to take part and still do in the 40 Hours Famine project implemented by World Vision, didn't you? God bless your heart. You have done the right fast—fast in order to share. Those who have taken part in this kind of fast knows fairly well how hard it is to go to bed hungry. Even you do it only once a year you can still feel the suffering of going to bed hungry. What if you go to bed hungry almost every day of your life? How hard will it be? How hard will it be for you to go to school with empty stomach? Yet, in some countries, including Laos, many children, especially in rural areas, go to school with empty stomach.

Do you know that over 22 percent of Lao people are living below the poverty line or living with less than \$1.25 a day (Figure as in 2014, see: [http://www.indexmundi.com/laos/population\\_below\\_poverty\\_line.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/laos/population_below_poverty_line.html)). Figure is much higher for rural Lao people. Although, the government and non-government organizations have done quite well, and they must be congratulated for their efforts, the poverty still persists. This is due to several factors, such as the lack of cultivation land, lack of skills to do sustainable agriculture, lack of good health, lack of opportunity, lack of capital fund, and the list goes on and on.

What can the poor do to break out of this cycle of poverty? Without external help the poor will still remain poor. It is very difficult for them to get out of their misery by themselves. It is simple. If you are poor you do not have enough to eat. You then have problems with your health. Poor health leads to inability to produce sufficient food. Lack of food leads to malnourishment. Malnourishment leads to poor health. So, it keeps you in the vicious cycle of poverty. There is no way for the poor to get out of this cycle by themselves. It is almost impossible!

*"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?"*

*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"*

*(Isaiah 58:6-7, ESV)*

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Digging the dry ground to plant vegetables

What can the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Laos do to help the poor? Because the church in Laos is made up of mostly poor people, what can the poor do to help the poor? Like the disciples of Jesus, we do not know where to find food to feed all the hungry among our midst. But, the Lord still tell us, “You give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37, ESV). We need a little boy with fish and bread. Would you be that little boy (John 6:9) who is willing to give up your own lunch to feed so many hungry people in Laos? Your breakfast, lunch, or dinner that you sacrificed through fasting, place it in the Hand of Jesus, will be multiplied and feed so many poor people of Laos.

As you follow the stories in this issue, you will be able to identify a project or ministry that you would like to get involved. Pray about it. Take action to do something about it. At the very least, you can fast and share the cost of that meal with the hungry people of Laos. Because it is this fast that the Lord has chosen. The Laos church is planning to establish a small vocation school—an organic agricultural school to train interest people how to do sustainable agriculture to produce more foods for their family and their community. We are planning to train people in motor mechanic, sewing, hairdressing, and so on. We will need a large plot of land for agriculture and school. Please pray for us as we are searching for an appropriate plot of land that we can afford to purchase and start up our vocational school to help Lao people break free from the cycle of poverty, leaving behind the poverty line for good.



Learning to cook healthy food to feed the poor in Laos

“If you give a fish to a Lao, he can eat it for a day. But if you teach him how to fish he can have fish to eat for the rest of his life.” Will you help us set up a vocation school in Laos and help us teach the Lao how to fish?

## “You Give Me Water to Drink”—Jesus



Report of Mok Jong Water-Sanitation Project

The Lord Jesus said that whatever we do to help poor people in Laos we are doing it to Him. Here is what He said, “The truth is, anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me” (Matthew 25:40, ERV). With the help of Adventist Southeast Asia Project (ASAP) the Lao Attached Field has implemented a Water-Sanitation project at Mok Jong Village, Ou District, Luang Prabang Province, Laos.

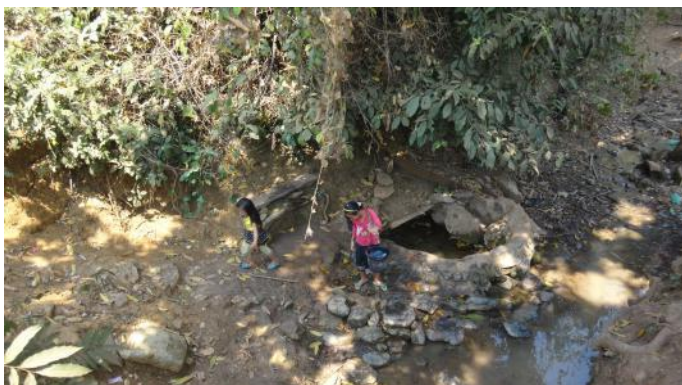


Children happy to see us

When I first visited this village in 2013 I found that the village was dry and dusty. There was **no clean water, no toilet, and no electricity**. The people still lived in a primitive way. Animals and people lived together in the village. So primitive that tourist companies organized trekking for tourists to come and see how people live. To the tourists and tour companies their way of life is money and business. So, no one was interested in improving the health and lifestyle of these people.







**Original drinking water source at Mok Jong Village**



**Traditional way of fetching water**

This little girl is only 10 years old. She should be playing like other kids, but she is carrying two buckets of water weighed over 30 kg. Life is so tough even for kids in this village. They are dirty, dehydrated, and malnourished. No wonder they were so happy to see us, as they had heard that we came to build a water system for their village.

When the village chief asked us for help to build a clean water-sanitation system for the village I could sense that he was genuinely concerned for the health and well-being of his villagers. But, his conviction was not enough to make the project beneficial and sustainable. Unless the whole village was with him any project would deem to fail. So, after ASAP approved our project we asked the chief to call on his villagers, so that we could explain what could be done together. We were assured of their commitment to the project and planning was in place with the approval and cooperation of the district government.



**Elder Saisana, LAF Secretary-Treasurer takes notes of the meeting**



**Taking construction materials up the mountains**



**Constructing water tank at a highest point**

Taking the construction materials from the main road up the mountains is a real challenge. Only locally adapted tractors are able to climb the hand-dug mountain tracks. One dry day a serious 4x4 vehicle with an experienced driver may be able to manage the 11 kilometre climb to the village. Yet, the



## “You Give Me Water to Drink” (Continued)



Community involvement in the project is good

village people painstakingly transported sand, iron bars, cement, pipes, and more to the village on their locally adapted tractors. It took them so many trips and they could not do it in one day. It took them several days to transport all building materials from the main road to the village.

Apart from labour, the villagers also provide planks for making frames, gravels which they can get it from the river. The commitment of the villagers was exemplary. Everybody, males and females, helped out. The males did the hard jobs and the females helped cooked for the males. It was a community project. Everybody got involved. The villagers poured their hearts into it. They even worked into the night.



Finally, after digging and laying pipes for over 2,000 meters from the water source to the water tank and onto the village two water outlets were fitted. And they were rewarded with flowing clean water and, as you can see below, there is plenty of water pressure.



On behalf of the Mok Jong villagers, we would like to thank ASAP's donors who have given clean water to the people of Mok Jong. We will begin Phase 2 of the project as soon as the Lao New Year is over or by the end of April.

What is remarkable about this project is that whenever someone turns on the water tap the water preaches the gospel message of love nonstop which human agent cannot do.



## “You Give Me Water to Drink” (Continued)



People now enjoy clean water right at their door steps

Words cannot be sufficient to express the people's gratitude to the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Laos that has brought this clean water right to their doorsteps. For many generations they have

lived in a primitive way and died from simple and preventable diseases. Nobody seemed to heed their plea. The tourists came only to watch their misery. Tour companies only wanted to take advantage of their poor situation. Now, the Adventist Church of Laos, through the help of ASAP donors, has given them the much needed life sustaining water.

Originally, because of the lack of water, the village has only 50 families and a little school up to grade 3. Now that there is running water the chief told us that other people from nearby villages who also have problem with water scarcity will probably consider moving to resettle in his village, which he also would gladly welcome them.

You can see that the potential of our water preaching the love of God for ages to come. It is a worthwhile evangelistic project. It is the project that the Lord Jesus would approve and be proud of. We are only implementing the Lord's method of evangelism. The writing of our dear prophetess counsels us that "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. The He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" . . . "Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit" (The *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 143, 144).

Phase two of the project is starting soon. People have already been encouraged to dig their latrine pits. We will then provide toilet bowls, cement, and sand. They will build their own toilets. Then, in phase 3, we will give health lectures to the people, encouraging them to fence their village and put their animals outside the village. This is probably the hardest thing to do since they have lived with this way of life for thousands of years. Please pray that we will be able to persuade them to take proper actions to improve their health. And once their physical health improved their spiritual health will follow.

In the future, I dream to put a Solar Station in the village. Then, people can just purchase batteries and bring them to charge at our Solar Station. Once this is done, Mok Jong Village will become a place where people would want to live there. Children can have light to read at night. Women can have light to stitch and sew to make extra income for their families. I remember, when I was young, I had no electricity. The kerosene lamp used to burn my hair when I fell asleep during night study.

Would you like to make a difference in Mok Jong? If you are interested in funding the Solar Station project please let us know. We will explore how to set up one and how much it will cost. I am not a solar energy expert, so I have to find out first. Together we can make a big change in the lives of the people of Mok Jong and beyond. Let there be light at Mok Jong Village. You have already given them drink and now let's give them light that will lighten their path to meet the Light of the World.



## Contact Us

You can write to us or give us a call for more information about our work and other mission projects.

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Thunwa drinking from his new specially designed milk bottle

## You Give Thunwa Drink

Whose sin that caused Thunwa to be born with a cleft palate and eye infection? Finding out won't change the face and eyes of Thunwa. I wrote about Thunwa in my last report and some of you have responded with kindness towards this poor little boy. With your monetary help we were able to assist Thunwa's mother to nurse and care for Thunwa. We bought formula milk powder and other baby necessities for Thunwa. We would like to thank an NGO friend, who is working in Laos, for his help in getting Thunwa's lined up for surgery at the Mahosot Hospital in Vientiane and for securing a specially designed milk bottle for Thunwa.



Elder Saisan Oudomsap, LAF Secretary-Treasurer presented milk powder and cash to help raise Thunwa

Caring for Thunwa may not cost very much, but for a long period of time anyone can forget about it. Please do not forget Thunwa and continue to help him grow up to become a beautiful person for God. No one knows what kind of person Thunwa will become in the future, 20 years from now. But, I do hope that when we are long gone into the graves Thunwa will continue to serve God, knowing that he has received help, given a chance to have a beautiful smile, from the peo-



ple of God when he was still a helpless baby. It is a person like Thunwa that the Lord Jesus referred to in His speech a little over 2,000 years when He said, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40, ESV).

Apostle Paul added, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:9-10), ESV; cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:13.

So, thank you again for your kind and generous donations to help raise Thunwa and return a beautiful smile to his face. On behalf of Thunwa may I wish you much God's blessing