



Strengthening Health and Hygiene

Budget: Year 2 (of a 3 year cycle): \$42,500, fully funded.

The Project:

Our partners have been working with and living alongside the poorest village people in southern Laos for 20 years. Entrust is funding the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) part of a larger project, providing 4 villages with a proper source of clean water, latrines for most households, hygiene education and training in maintaining the latrine and water system. These 4 villages were selected because water-borne infections are most prevalent here and the water and sanitation equipment is the least developed.

Outcomes and Impact:

The community plays a vital role at every stage of the project, contributing to costs and labour and participating in local construction committees. This brings its own challenges but eventually leads to a greater sense of ownership and encourages behavioural change.

- 2 new water systems were completed during this period, one in Janamtai Village and the other in Tokongkeo Village, with the active participation of the villagers and the District Office
- 53 new toilets were constructed across the 4 villages, with only 4 left to be built next year. The main challenge being addressed is reinforcing the benefits of toilets and changing long-entrenched habits of going into the jungle
- A total of 50 health education seminars have now been conducted focusing on personal hygiene, correct sanitation and the prevention of water borne and seasonal diseases. The project has transitioned to supporting selected health volunteers from each village to run the training, with assistance from district health centre staff. This approach has proven to be more helpful and sustainable in conveying key messages and achieving long-term knowledge transfer, especially as use of the local dialect has more impact
- Technical training in construction and maintenance of the system has been continually reinforced during the project so that once it is complete, the villagers are well prepared to take on maintenance in its entirety and already have an established sense of ownership

Mrs Vida, mother of a newborn, lives in a household of 16 people. Meeting basic needs was tough for such a large family, with barely enough food or water to survive. Women work hard in the forest all day in search of food and then have the extra burden of a long arduous walk to fetch water. But things have radically changed with the availability of clean water close to home. She says, *“After giving birth, it was such a blessing not to have to carry water buckets every time I needed to cook or bathe my baby. Instead, I can rest, free from worrying about water. I have more time to work in my garden and it’s much easier to grow vegetables and produce extra food for the family”*.



Thank you for helping to bring clean water to villages in Laos. It has transformed their daily lives.