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Quarterly Performance Report (October - December 2005)

This is the fifth installment of the quarterly performance report (October to December 2005) from Handicap International Belgium (HIB) concerning the project “Supporting War Victims and People with Disabilities in Lao PDR”. As indicated in the annual work plan, submitted to USAID and subsequently accepted, the implementation of activities is significantly limited until the memorandum of understanding (MOU) is accepted by the Government of Lao PDR (GOL) represented by the Ministry of Health (MOH) specifically the National Rehabilitation Center (NRC). Activities that do not require approval have been initiated and all reasonable steps are being taken to ensure the timely acceptance of the MOU.

The main focus of this quarter was pursuing the status of the MOU, training and capacity building for CBR team members, vocational training at Lao-Korea Vocational Training Center, PWD awareness activities, and an international study tour.

Details of Current Progress

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Program Set-up

Luc Delneuve, Director of HIB, met with authorities from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to discuss the status and situation of the MOU. The MOU remains pending, but is on consideration at Prime Minister’s Office.

Planning and Coordination

Even though, the project is still on hold, due to the delay of the acceptance of the MOU quarterly planning, in collaboration with the CBR team members and NRC, is in place to monitor the progress of activities.

Training

Functional Rehabilitation/Chiang Mai University (CMU) – Faculty of Medicine, Occupational Therapy Department

- The first functional rehabilitation module was completed
 - Mrs. Leusith and Mrs. Sengchanh, representatives of the Savannakhet Provincial Rehabilitation Center (PRC) and Mrs. Southala and Mr. Bounping (CBR Trainers) participated in 1 month training at CMU. The course was specifically designed for the HIB Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program to meet the assessed needs of PWD.

Vocational Training

- Eight PWD have commenced a 6-month vocational training program at the Lao-Korean Vocational Training Center. This training center is well equipped for the integration of PWD in terms of curriculum and other necessary facilities. A variety of different courses are available to meet the vocational needs of Lao PDR. The students represent: Sikhottabong, Phonhong, Thoulakhom, Outthomphone and Khanthabouly Districts of Vientiane Capital, Vientiane and Savannakhet Provinces. Gender equity goals have been achieved with a 50:50 ratio male:female.

- One student, from Phonhong District, has been nominated as class representative and also chief of the dormitory due to his seniority and good attitudes towards his colleagues. This reflects the dignity and honor of PWD in terms of social integration. This activity is in line with the government policy to eradicate poverty.
- One student is being supported to pursue a business management certificate at Sengdara Management Training Center

Lao Coco

- Two PWD have completed a 6-month training course in handicraft production, one of which will be permantly employed by Lao Coco.

Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD)

- Mr. Sisamer Inthavongsa, Project Manager for Savannakhet Province and Mr. Peng Sayapheth, CBR-Provincial Coordinator attended a “Training to Strengthen Community Based Rehabilitation Through Participatory Comprehensive Approaches towards Rights-based and Sustainable Community Development” (11 October – 04 November 2005) at the APCD in Bangkok, Thailand.



Trainees share with facilitator at APCD

Project Management Training

- Ten participants (4 from NRC, 5 district Supervisors and 1 representative of LDPA) attended training on project management. The training focused on:
 - Definition and meaning of management
 - Problem analysis and project planning
 - Activities implementation
 - Reporting system

Developmental Toy Production

- Appropriate developmental toys are very difficult to obtain in Lao PDR, especially outside of Vientiane. In cooperation with the Occupational Therapy Trainer, Program Coordinator, and the NRC CBR Training Team a set of 20 developmental toys have been identified as appropriate for stimulation.

- One carpenter and one tailor were selected from each district to be a producer of toys and adaptive equipment so PWD who needs developmental toys/adaptive equipment can access them at district level.
- A carpentry consultant, Mr. Charlie Lombardo, was secured to conduct the training. The training focused on 3 main components: (1) skill development, (2) occupational safety, (3) toy safety (i.e. use of nails, glue, rough edges, etc)



Carpenters learn to make developmental toys

Inclusive Education (IE)

- Mr. Sisamer, Project Manager and Mrs. Southala, CBR Trainer and teacher of the deaf, attended an in-service training in Savannakhet for teachers on IE, sponsored by Save the Children – Norway (National IE Program). There were three objectives for this training:
 - Observe and learn how IE is being presented in Lao PDR
 - Participate in all activities
 - Design a module, to be include in the nationwide training, that addresses the identified gap between the school and the community, parents and children with disabilities

Financial Committee

A workshop, to follow up the Microfinance Management Training, was held to finalize:

- Related paper work (membership and loan application form, loan contract, approval letter for village saving group and membership book)
- Roles and responsibility of financial committee
- Job descriptions for the financial committee members
- Regulations for the saving credit union
- Accounting books

Experience Exchange

Four members of the CBR team including: Program Coordinator, Project Manager, Provincial Coordinator and CBR Trainer participated in a study tour to the “Capacity Building for PWD in the Community” (CABDIC) Program in Cambodia (6 – 12 November 2005). The objectives of this activity were:

- Improve quality of implementation of CBR program
- Build strong networks among CBR Programs in SE Asia

- Observe home-based rehabilitation activities and services provided to PWD
- Observe activities that include community participation and address integration
- Understand the organizational structure of the program and the steps taken to develop an indigenous NGO



Sharing experiences with PWD group in Cambodia

Workshop on “Decent Work for PWD”

This significant event took place at Lane Xang Hotel from November 8 to 9, 2005. Thirty participants attended the workshop, representing the GOL, government and non-government organizations and PWD, under the financial sponsorship of Regional International Labor Organization (ILO) Bangkok, in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and the National Commission for Disabled People (NCDP). Participants exchanged views on the international and regional approaches regarding ILO principles, especially vocational training in Southeast Asia in terms of Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). The participants collaborated with the ILO consultants to design a concrete action plan to re-organize and improve a number of certain activities:

- Empower the NCDP
- Promote the rights and develop law on PWD
- Promote vocational training and education
- Promote decent work and self-employment

Apart from what it has illustrated above, the meeting participants have unanimously reached a consensus and worked out concrete recommendations to the GOL in general and in particular to Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare for efficient consideration:

- Effectively re-organize and strengthen NCDP
- Promote the rights of PWD (education and legislation)
- Public awareness and advocacy for PWD
- Collect reliable data on PWD and accurate number nation-wide
- Promote and facilitate decent work-self environment, sustainable livelihoods, and employment
- Improve public utilities, social integration, training, education, and employment
- Promote formal and non-formal education on regular basis for PWD
- Design a strategic and concrete action plan

Problems Encountered

The Prime Minister’s Office cancelled activities for International Day of Disabled People (3 December) 12 hours before they were to begin. There was no reason given. The activity was rescheduled for 17 December (See “success stories”)

Cost Overruns

None noted at this time

Success Stories

International Day of Disabled People

Theme: “Rights of Persons with Disability: Action in Development”



Opening Ceremonies



Awareness Walk for Rights, with event banner

CBR project of HIB, in cooperation with LDPA, prepared and held a celebration for the International Day of Disabled People. The celebration was held on 17 December 2005 at Sokpaluang Polytechnique School. The Minister of Labor and Social Welfare was the distinguished chairperson. The event included GOs and NGOs staff, PWD and their families and other relevant parties. Over 1000 people attended this awareness event.

HIB facilitated 80 beneficiaries from project villages in Sikhottabong, Phonhong, Thoulakhom and Vangvieng Districts to attend the day’s events.

PWD Awareness Poster Activity

The idea was to create PWD awareness poster. The CBR Team organized a drawing contest with 15 hearing impaired students who attend the Sensory Impaired School at the NRC. Under the supervision of artistic teacher from National Fine Art school the students engaged in producing drawings representing their feelings about disability in society. The art teacher with CBR Team members chose the “winning” drawing. This drawing will be made into an awareness poster in January 2006 and used for the HIB 2005 holiday greeting card.



A student prepares his drawing



Students display their drawings