



## Final Report for

## Classroom of Hope

### Project concerned

### Meuang Phiang Primary School Building

We supported the local community of Phonxay Village in Xaignabouli Province, Lao PDR by constructing one new school building with six fully-furnished classrooms and four new toilets

### Implemented by

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## Executive Summary

Meuang Phiang Primary School, located in Phonxay Village of north-western Lao PDR, consisted of three buildings with a total of 10 classrooms. One of the buildings was in good condition and could be used safely into the future. The other two buildings, however, were in very bad condition, lacked safe and motivating learning environments and were in dire need of replacement.

To address this critical situation, we constructed one fully-furnished school building with six classrooms and four additional new toilets. Construction of Meuang Phiang Primary School began in May 2022 and was fully completed on 13 December 2022.

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### 1. Overview

Lao PDR is considered one of the poorest and least developed countries in South-East Asia. Even though the social and economic conditions in Lao PDR have improved since its independence in 1975, there is still significant wealth disparity amongst Laotians.

Many people live in extremely remote and isolated areas with rudimentary infrastructure. They are often neglected by the government and unable to benefit from economic growth. Although quality education is one of the key factors in poverty reduction and the creation of sustainable development, most people in Lao PDR do not receive a basic education. The country's education system is ineffective due to poorly equipped classrooms and a lack of textbooks, educational supplies, teachers' books, and libraries.

Phonxay Village was first established in 1496 and is the oldest village in the district. It is currently home to 3,896 people in 705 households who rely on animal husbandry, farming, plantation work and construction as their sources of livelihood. The village has mobile phone coverage, water, and electricity, but no local access to health care.

Meuang Phiang Primary School was established in 1941 with a current enrolment of 249 students (129 boys, 120 girls) and has 13 teachers (3 male and 10 female), two of whom are volunteers. All of the students come from two surrounding villages all within one kilometre of the school. The school grounds consisted of three buildings, with a total of 10 classrooms. One of the buildings, built in 2008 and supported by an organization called Room to Read, was in decent condition and still able to be used safely into the future. However, the other two buildings were in bad condition and desperately in need of replacement. Both buildings were built in 1996 by the community as student enrolment was increasing and the school desperately needed more classrooms. Unfortunately, the buildings were not constructed well and exposure to the harsh Laotian climate has left the buildings in a serious state of disrepair. Both buildings were made of wood with dirt floors. The wood had become infested with termites and the deterioration was greatly compromising the structural integrity of the buildings. Zinc sheet metal roofs did not provide proper ventilation and the classrooms became unbearably hot, especially in the summer months. With holes in the walls and roofs, the rainy season meant that the dirt floors would become muddy. The buildings were structurally unsound and at risk of collapse. The teachers and students clearly lacked a safe and motivating environment to teach and learn, and the buildings desperately needed replacement.

In an effort to alleviate this problem, we constructed one new school building with six fully-furnished classrooms. The new classrooms offer a safe and conducive learning and teaching environment for the students and teachers. The construction of the new building emphasises the importance of education to the whole community and provides an incentive for the children to continue and complete their education.

We also built four new toilets to help improve the sanitation standards at the school and to prevent hygiene-related illnesses.

## **2. Operational Implementation**

It is our belief that establishing a close partnership with community leaders and the school management team leads to a more successful outcome. As with all of our projects, we encouraged the village to actively contribute to the construction process to instil a strong sense of pride and ownership in the project. The community contributed by providing wood for the walls and for the wall frames, preparing soil to fill in the foundation, as well as providing water and electricity for the construction process.

A local contractor was chosen to manage labour and transportation of materials, oversee construction and provide the furniture. The contractor was paid in instalments after the completion of each step of the building process, according to a written agreement. 10% of the total construction cost will be held for twelve months after completion of construction as a guarantee for the quality of the work.

Construction began in May of 2022. The progress was monitored to ensure our high quality standards were met, and we were pleased with the cooperation of the community. Despite some delays due to heavy rains, the overall construction process went well and we are satisfied with the result. The official completion date was 13 December 2022. The school and community are now responsible for the operation and maintenance of the new school building.

The opening ceremony is not yet scheduled. It would be wonderful if you could personally attend this important event. Please do let us know so that we can schedule a date.

## **3. Project Performance**

**Effectiveness:** The following initial objectives were achieved:

- One new school building was constructed equipped with six fully-furnished classrooms and four new toilets. A new, quality learning environment for the students will incentivise them to fully participate in their education.

- With a new primary school building, parents from Phonxay Village will find relief knowing there is now a safe and motivating place to support their child's education.
- We expect the community to benefit tremendously from the new school building. Students will be more engaged, literacy rates will increase, school attendance will rise, and school dropout rates will decrease. We further expect that more students will continue to secondary school.

**Efficiency:** When building schools in Lao PDR, we follow specific protocols and guidelines which help provide financial consistency. Agreements with our contractor ensures that project costs remain stable with currency fluctuations or changes in the price of building materials. Our final construction costs were therefore in line with the proposed budget of **USD 64,225**. Administration expenses are a fixed percentage of the total construction budget and are allocated in full.

Please note that the financial reconciliation on page 6 does not yet include the 10% guarantee payment on the total labour cost, which will only be released after the successful checking of the building in 12 months' time.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability of the school is guaranteed through close cooperation and collaboration with the government. Meuang Phiang Primary School is a government school; the government will provide teacher salaries, staff training, etc. The school management and the community have agreed to maintain and manage the facility after completion.

#### 4. Project Chronology

The following link provides more information and photos about the various phases of construction:

<https://childsdream.org/projects/meuang-phiang-primary-school/>

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for your support and trust. Together, we were able to make a significant impact in the lives of many children. Thank you so much!

It would be great if we could embark on a similar project again in the near future.

Chiang Mai, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022

#### Child's Dream Foundation



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5. Photographs



Two of the school buildings desperately needed replacement



Poor structural design and the passing of time had caused the buildings to become quite deteriorated, with holes in the walls and roof and cracks in the foundation



The students clearly lacked a safe and motivating space to learn



School and community leaders met to sign the contract with Child's Dream



Construction began in May 2022



Construction continued to progress smoothly



Four new toilets were built to improve the sanitation standards at the school



Construction was officially completed on 13 December 2022, and the community and students are so excited!

Thank you very much for your great support! What a wonderful school!

