

Accelerating Healthy Agriculture and Nutrition (AHAN) project, Pillar 3 of the Partnership for Improved Nutrition (PIN) in Lao PDR.
Project funded by the European Union, with matching programming supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) in Saravane Province. Implemented by World Vision Laos, Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières, Green Community Development Association and Burnet Institute.

ahan #1

newsletter

1st quarter 2020



Implementing

AHAN activities are now rolling out through the 3 project provinces, after gathering evidence of the target communities' needs.

find out all the details in p. 2

Other subjects in this edition:

- [Update] The pictorial story of the project activities - p. 6
- [Who are we?] Welcoming Micah Olad, new Program Director for AHAN - p. 5
- [Progress] Get in touch with the progress indicators of AHAN project - p. 4





AHAN gathering evidence and starting to impact its target communities

Ban Phone, Phalaxay District, Savannakhet Province.

The villagers are gathered to attend the first Hygiene promotion event, implemented by AHAN and Health Center staff. At the end of this activity, the mothers and their children will know how to protect themselves from waterborne diseases.

Over the past years, nutrition has improved in Lao PDR, but there is still room for enhancement.

With 47% of stunted children under 5 years old, Attapeu, Saravane and Savannakhet provinces are widely above the national standards (33%), which can be seen as a public health issue according to the World Health Organisation.

Despite the good progress made on the water supply coverage, only 41% of households have access to basic water facilities during the dry season in Attapeu, Saravane and Savannakhet provinces. 73% of households practice open defecation in these provinces because of the lack of latrines, and every day women spend 3 times longer on domestic work than their husband in these provinces. These have been the major findings revealed by AHAN baseline survey, conducted in Decem-

ber 2018 and confirming the relevance of the project intervention.

Based in the 3 southern provinces of Lao PDR, AHAN is a sustainable development project aiming to create supportive conditions to enhance household nutrition through 5 specific objectives: to **improve the access to sufficient and diverse foods** year-round, to **improve dietary and are practices** among women of reproductive age (15-45 years) and children under 5 years, to **reduce the incidence of selected Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) related diseases/illness** linked to undernutrition, to **improve gender equitable relation** at the household level, particularly in decision-making and distribution of workload and to **strengthen multi-sector coordination** and support for nutrition.

After gathering all the evidence

Project area

3

Provinces
Attapeu, Saravane
and Savannakhet

12

Districts

149

Villages

124 villages supported by the European Union and 25 additional villages in Saravane, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

described earlier through the conduction of a baseline survey, a Nutrition-Sensitive Value-Chain Analysis (NS-VCA), water system design surveys, Gender Analysis, Disability Analysis and market scoping study, and after the Memorandum of Understanding signature in May 2019, AHAN could start its operations.

But before the start of the activities at the community level, an important effort on training is needed. Thus, all AHAN staff, partners, authorities and village volunteers followed several trainings on the five components of the project: savings groups, home garden and small animal raising for the agriculture component; IMNCI, IYCF and Mothers groups for the Health, Village Water Sanitation Management Committees (VWSMC) and Community-Led Total Sanitation for the WASH part, Gender equality... All these trainings have been rolled out over the past months.

By the end of March 2020, the agriculture trainings (homegardening, small animal raising), saving groups, village rice-mill model, hygiene promotion events, water pump construction and women labour

saving technologies distribution are the most advanced activities, conducted in a 9-month span, after official MoU signature (cf. page 4 Progress). In March, a first AHAN targeted village has been declared open defecation free in Toomlarn district, Saravane Province.

The second year of AHAN has also been unfortunately marked by a major flooding in early-September, affecting targeted villages of Saravane (Saravane district) and Savannakhet (Thapangthong and Xonnbuly districts) provinces. Utilising other funding sources, World Vision provided relief to the most affected targeted communities by delivering rice, drinkable water and food items to almost 3,000 households (2,976 HHs, 17,385 people) across the above 3 affected AHAN districts.

We are now halfway through the 3rd year of the project, activities are well underway and AHAN staff is strongly dedicated to reach its goal: to improve nutrition of Lao most vulnerable children and their families.

A holistic approach to enhance nutrition in Lao rural areas.



From the Memorandum of Understanding signature to the start of activities' implementation, AHAN team and its partners dedicated to the most vulnerable communities of the project targeted villages all year long.

[Progress]

The visual track of the project achievements.

Find here some indicators of achievements from the beginning of the project to March 2020.



Research points

conducted over the 3 provinces (Baseline survey, Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chain analysis, Water System design, Gender Analysis, Disability analysis and Market Scoping study)



Start-up events

organised (12 districts, 112 villages) to mark the beginning of AHAN activities implementation



Water Systems

constructed

to allow 13,582 people from 29 villages to access quality water



Memorandum of Understanding signature

Marking the official start of the project, in May 2019



744

Households

trained on improved and sustainable farming techniques



Saving Groups established

to allow people to save money and access to credit for the nutrition of their households in 92 villages



180

Households

equipped with Labour Saving Technologies allowing 543 women to save time on domestic work

[Who are we?]

Portrait of AHAN staff member.

This month, we welcome **Micah Olad**, new AHAN Program Director.



“I want to see children thriving and reaching their maximum potentials in life.”

A 13-year public health practitioner, Micah Olad joined World Vision International in Lao PDR to become the new AHAN Program Director last February.

Native from Ghana, West Africa, Micah Olad started to work as a Coordinator to an infectious disease called Guinea worm, then as a technical officer for an HIV program. Graduated from a Master's Degree in Public Health, he continued his journey towards the

health sector through different roles like Technical Programs Manager for Nutrition and Health, Health specialist and Advocacy campaigns Coordinator for health. His strong passion for nutrition led him to work for a project called ‘Food for Education’ in Sierra Leone, Africa.

“When I saw the job announcement for AHAN, I was very appealed to see the integration of different areas including Agriculture, WASH and Gender to improve nutrition” explains Micah. “With my passion in working for the most vulnerable children and their families, I considered joining the team and was pleased to see the dedication and commitment of our

field staff working to ensure mothers and children’s nutritional status is improving”, he adds.

For the new AHAN Program Director, the objective is clear: “Through a collaborative effort with our partners, I expect to see the next LSIS and our evaluation report to have improved data on undernutrition and stunting. I want to see children thriving and reaching their maximum potentials in life in our operational areas. Laos is a country full of love and once children are healthy, they will naturally show love everywhere they are.”



[Update]

The picture story of the past months.

Official beginning of the project, the Memorandum of Understanding signature in May 2019 allowed AHAN staff to start the implementation of its activities. Despite the climatic constraint of last September, AHAN teams put together huge efforts to keep the activities on track.

Here are the highlights of AHAN program's last months.



Lao Women Union and AHAN staff explaining the Savings Groups model to the villagers of Ban Donekong, Atsaphone district. Savings Groups is an approach used to facilitate savings and credit in a small-scale and sustainable way. It allows vulnerable households to save money and access loans, enabling them to plan ahead, cope with emergencies, invest in the health and, in particular for AHAN project, in the nutrition of their children.

Villagers from Ban Phone, in Phalanxay district, trying to avoid diseases caused by bad hygiene habits, during a WASH promotion event.

Those events rolled out in all AHAN villages aim to build better understanding on the causes of waterborne diseases and to trigger changes on water, hygiene and sanitation behaviors.



Children in Ban Cholavieng - Ta Oi district, Saravane Province - enjoying the use of clean water...



... before AHAN project provided a borehole to the community, the villagers were fetching water daily, going 5,5km away into the mountainous paths to collect poor quality stream water.



The villagers of Ban Khonlath trying the brand new Tao Fai Vai cook stove during the Women Labor Saving Technology pilot distribution event.

Less wood to use, less time to cook, less CO₂ emissions... this cook stove has been one of the most successful technologies among the 6 ones tried by the communities during the pilot period. Along with water tanks and push carts, this well appreciated technology has been selected to be distributed in all target villages.



*Love your family,
love Laos*



Stop the spread of COVID-19

Stay at home

Stay 2 meters away from other people

Wash your hands regularly

AHAN Project supports the efforts of the Government of Lao PDR and the World Health Organization to avoid the spread of the COVID-19.

Thus, hygiene promotion events have been rolled-out in targeted villages before the lockdown was pronounced, to raise awareness to our target communities and share all the prevention messages developed by Health authorities.

To access these materials, click on the link below:
www.who.int

If you develop symptoms like fever, cough and difficulty breathing, report to the health professionals immediately by calling 166 or 02054066777 at any time for advice in Lao, Chinese and English.

Get the latest updates of AHAN project on partners and donors Facebook accounts:



@WorldVisionLaos
@AVSF.ONG
@gcda.wordpress
@burnetinstitute

@EUinLaos
@dfat.gov.au



AHAN
Let's keep in touch!
Accelerating Healthy
Agriculture and Nutrition

If you want to receive this newsletter, feel free to contact us:



Nicolas_Charlassier@wvi.org