

LAOS

COUNTRY PROFILE



One of the few remaining communist states, Laos is slowly transitioning to a market economy. Nevertheless, it is still a poor, underdeveloped country with approximately a third of its citizens, particularly those in rural areas, living in extreme poverty. This small, land-locked country in Southeast Asia has many remote areas that are difficult to reach. Access to education is limited, especially for women and ethnic minorities. Poor health and malnutrition remain major problems in Laos, with a third of children suffering from malnutrition.



Children in remote villages in Laos show signs of malnutrition and poor health.

WHO WE SERVE

Our projects in Laos focus on some of the country's poorest and most isolated villages. We work with marginalized ethnic minority communities with little access to public support.

HOW WE HELP

Since 1982, World Concern has been working in Laos, improving the health, livelihood and education of vulnerable people in remote areas of the country.

Food security / In rural villages we provide training for and support of rice banks (storage for lean times), and introduce new vegetable and fruit crops. We also support poultry and animal-raising groups.

Better health / Nutrition and hygiene training, installing rainwater harvesting systems and latrines are among vital ways we help improve health in communities.

Education / With one third of the population being illiterate, we support educational opportunities by training teachers, materials for schools, and building school equipment. We also provide education for ethnic minorities.

HIV and AIDS prevention / Young migrant people in border villages near Thailand are at risk for HIV and AIDS. We educate people and encourage the reduction of risk-taking behaviors.

Holistic community development / Through our One Village Transformed campaign, we're assisting remote villages cut off from development to gain access to clean water, health care, education, reliable food sources and jobs that will provide a good income year after year. One way we help communities grow incomes is through sustainable coffee production.



Laos

MEET PETSAY

Orphaned at the age of 12, Petsay was cared for by the villagers of Xiengmai, a poor community in rural Laos. Children in these remote villages have few opportunities, and often live out their lives in extreme poverty with little hope for the future.

Petsay was able to attend a World Concern-sponsored school and developed a passion for education. When he finished school, World Concern paid for him to attend two-years of teacher training, with the agreement that he would come back to Xiengmai and teach.

Today, Petsay is a beloved teacher of third, fourth and fifth graders in his village. He is equipping the next generation of children to have a far better future than their parents. "I have great hope for my community," he said.



Once an orphan himself, Petsay is now a joyful teacher of children in his village.

ABOUT WORLD CONCERN

World Concern is a Christian global relief and development organization. With our supporters, our faith compels us to extend life-saving help and opportunity to people facing the most profound human challenges of extreme poverty. At World Concern, the solutions we offer, the work we do—with your help—creates lasting, sustainable change. Lasting change that provides lasting hope.

Our areas of expertise include disaster response, clean water, education, food security, child protection, microfinance and health. For more information about our work, please visit worldconcern.org.

ABOUT LAOS

Population / 6,993,000

Life expectancy / 65 years

Infant mortality rate / 48 deaths per 1,000 live births

Under 5 mortality rate / 61 deaths per 1,000

Malnutrition / 21% of children under 5 in some areas

Primary school enrollment / 44%

Literacy rate / 68.7%

Religions / Buddhist 67%, Christian 1.5%, other 31.5%

% of rural population using improved sanitation / 38%

Population below poverty line / 27%

Average income / \$750 per year

Sources: CIA World Factbook, UNICEF