

COPE

Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise



Who are we and what do we do?

In Laos, if you need an artificial limb (prosthesis), a limb support device (an orthosis), a walking aid or a wheelchair, you come to COPE (Co-operative Orthotic & Prosthetic Enterprise). COPE is currently the only source of these devices in the country, and serves those injured by unexploded ordinance (UXO) as well as those injured in traffic and other accidents.

COPE was established in 1997 as a joint venture between the Ministry of Health and a number of international organizations concerned with disability in Lao PDR. The operation is directed entirely by COPE's own staff, who work with the staff of the National Rehabilitation Centre in Vientiane, and four provincial Rehabilitation Centers located in Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet and Pakse.

Every year there are new casualties from UXO in Laos, despite the fact that the war ended in 1975. With higher prices for scrap metal and millions of UXO still lying around, poor and disadvantaged people are tempted to disarm them in order to salvage the scrap metal. Inevitably there are casualties, especially among adult males who often have families dependent on them. A sad trend is the increase in the numbers of child victims, as they attempt to increase family income from scrap metal.

Since COPE's establishment, the number of patients we serve has risen from 138 a year to nearly 1,500. We have trained 14 Lao people to international standards in prosthetic and orthotic procedures and introduced inexpensive and robust technology for making and repairing artificial limbs and support devices.

A Visitor Centre is scheduled to open in 2007 in Vientiane, enabling visitors to understand what happens to victims of UXO, and the rehabilitation processes they go through.





Coping with disabilities

What can you experience?



- The COPE Centre is on Khou Vieng Street, about 500m from the Morning Market in Vientiane. Visitors to the COPE Center can see the range of devices that we fit to victims of UXO. For visitors who call in advance, we can also offer guided tours to show how our devices are produced.
- Visitors can meet our Lao staff, who have graduated from the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics (CSPO), and find out about their vision and commitment to rehabilitating Lao victims of UXO.
- To understand more about the lifetime effects of UXO on local people, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings we hold clinics in our Vientiane Centre where visitors can meet people who are undergoing treatment.
- Make a donation to help us care for more patients and support our rehabilitation centers.
- Contact your hotel or guesthouse for more information.



Donation Guidelines

- \$40 – Costs of transport, food and accommodation for the average patient
- \$100 – All the medical and logistical costs for an average patient