



Building an environment for a better life and a sustainable future

Finally see with my eyes

Newsletter reader visits XKH

I doubt very much that many passers-by notice the men, wearing JMAS uniforms, working in the paddy fields. Where would Laos be if it wasn't for the dedication of these men and women? Every day they risk their lives to make their country a better and safer place - safe for children to play, farmers to work and animals to roam.

When I visited the site at Phaxay District, I soon realized I wouldn't survive a week doing the job of clearing away UXOs. I wouldn't have the courage and I certainly wouldn't have the patience to work slowly and carefully, day after day searching for bombs. The workers have to give the same amount of care whether they discover a live bomb or a small piece of metal - danger is everywhere. I appreciated the time the workers took to show me what they do. Most tourists come to Laos to see the various sites, the pagodas, monuments etc. These are all the heritage of the country, but the war and the bombs are also a part of the country's heritage and people should know about these things too.

I therefore hope your website and newsletter is read by many people, preferably before they visit Laos, so that they can have a better understanding and appreciation for all the work JMAS and other NGOs dealing in UXO disposal have done, in order to allow tourists to roam freely in that lovely country.

Thank you JMAS and thank you to the team I visited and all others working with your NGO.

Yours sincerely

Peter Heyes



Young Japanese visit JMAS office

International Communication dept., Gakushuuin University

1) Yosihmi YAMADA

I have been to Laos three times and thought I could understand well about Lao culture & education. However, today I know it was wrong.

I'm sorry I never heard a lot of 'Bombies' (submunition) existing in Laos, even though its name. I was surprised that total bombs dropped during Vietnam war was up to 3 million ton in agricultural land, even at school, when Lao population was 3 million. In other word, one ton could kill one Laotian.

People I met here look strong and happy even living in such an awful situation. They know how to enjoy the life with their family and neighbors. .On the contrary, we live in a very safe country, such as can go and study anywhere. However, we feel lack of something in our lives.

Now I recognized how many countries we visit is not important, but what we study in the countries is more importance. I want to know more about real bombies through JMAS and my Lao friends.

I'll graduated from a university nearly soon. I have an idea to inform this story to people around me.

2) Miqiwa SHBATA

I have been to Laos four times, but this time is the first time to visit JMAS and know UXO clearance activity.

I received a severe shock from that a huge number of UXOs are still remained and victims consists of many children, furthermore we should know those real situation.

If we got UXO information in Japan, I would have feel reality. By the chance to hear it, we could realize that Laos had the miserable history.

Through 4-time visit in Laos, I misunderstood as if I knew well on Laos, but now notice there are my unknown Lao world remained. I want to study more about Laos and UXO, on the other hand I try to inform today's story to Japanese.

3) Maki ITO

I have known on bombies by newspaper and their pictures even in Japan, but I couldn't believe the existence of them in Laos, because Lao people are kind and always smile.

Today it is good to listen about bombies. I have been Laos second times but neither visited NGO concerned UXO problems or seeing UXO activities in the field.

I feel now I should go to see the real world with my eyes as a member of developed countries.

Since I started working this April, it must be difficult to visit Laos, but I want to keep my activity to assist UXO project.

Manami TADANO

I had a good chance to hear on my unknown Laos, which is UXO problem. I have been in Laos three times, but never know a lot of bombies existing. I saw many landmine victims in Vietnam and Cambodia, but a few in Laos. The UXO existence was out of my idea

I have done volunteer work at NGO to assist landmine victims, but I have regretted of only its outline. Today's briefing made me to contact the same NGO again to know what I can do for them.

As there are a lot of Japanese who have no knowledge on UXO problems, I would like to convey the real situation to friends and university juniors who are interested in International Cooperation.



Feedback

Thank you for the last 2 newsletters--interesting, as always. Peter's comment about the people being very brave is a good point. I could not imagine going to work in my gardens and worrying all the time about bombs exploding beneath me!

Carolyn Rallison,

I always enjoy reading the newsletters that you send to me; thank you for sending them. Last year I was listening to National Public Radio and there was a story about bomb removal in Laos. In the story they mentioned that in Laos they refer to the undetonated explosives as "bombies" where here in the US we would say "bombs." It might be helpful to the non-Laotian reader to understand that distinction.

Bill

Philadelphia, USA

Please let us have your comments. Contact details above