

Annual Report 2024



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Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI)

About us

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Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI) is a Nationwide Membership Lao Civil Society Organization that was established in 2006 under the Lao Union of Science and Engineering Associations (LUSEA) and re-registered under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) license No. 511/MoHA on August 12, 2012.

Vision

ARMI aims to contribute to the well-being of all-ethnic groups based on mutual respect, equal opportunities, care for the environment, and the sustainable use of resources.

Mission

To build capacities amongst target groups to improve their quality of life for their well-being in green and sustainable ways.

Target groups

Rural communities, the poor and disadvantaged, especially children, youth, women, and people with disabilities (PWDs).

Values:

Solidarity, Participation, Transparency, Effectiveness, and Opportunities for All.

Members and Human Resource

In 2024, there are a total of 105 members (45 females and 3 disabled), 5 board members (3 females), 3 inspection committee members (1 female), 95 employees (41 females and 3 disabled), and 2 volunteers (0 females).

President's remark



Ms. Phetlamphone PHALAKHONE
President of ARMI

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

This year marks 18 years since our association was founded in October 2006—a journey defined by resilience, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of ethnic communities, especially in rural Laos. Through the years, our mission to foster happiness, stability, and prosperity has remained steadfast, even amid challenges such as climate change, economic hardships, and funding difficulties. Yet, these trials have only strengthened our resolve to serve.

None of our achievements would have been possible without the trust and partnership of our donors, international organizations, civil society groups, and government authorities. Your support has enabled us to turn plans into meaningful action, creating tangible change for those who need it most. As we enter 2025, we renew our determination to overcome obstacles, deliver lasting impact, and uplift Lao communities. Together with all stakeholders, we are confident that we can build a more sustainable and equitable future—one where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. On behalf of ARMI, I extend my deepest gratitude to each of you for standing with us on this journey.

Director's remark



Mr. Amphone SOUVANNALATH
Director of ARMI

As we reflect on 2024, we mark the fourth year of implementing our five-year strategic plan (2021-2025), with its focus on five critical pillars: poverty reduction, health and nutrition, Environment and Natural Resource, education, and support for persons with disabilities. Despite facing considerable challenges, particularly from animal disease outbreaks that constrained our planned expansion, we have achieved meaningful progress through the tireless efforts of our team and the strong partnerships with communities and local stakeholders. This year's accomplishments stand as testament to what can be achieved through perseverance and collaboration. While disease outbreaks presented unexpected obstacles, we responded by strengthening community resilience through targeted capacity-building programs. These initiatives have empowered local partners to independently identify and address challenges, while new income-generating activities have helped sustain livelihoods during difficult times.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the steadfast support of our partners, donors, and community members. Your trust and collaboration have been instrumental in turning challenges into opportunities for innovation and growth. As we look ahead to the final year of our strategic plan, we remain committed to building on this foundation. With your continued support, we are confident in our ability to create lasting impact and help build more resilient, self-sufficient communities. We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have walked this journey with us, and we look forward to achieving even greater milestones together in the year to come.

Contents



Contents

About Us	I
President and Director's remarks	III
Project and Programme in 2024	VII
5 Years of Strategic Goals (2021-2025)	IX
Goals 1: To reduce poverty by improving food security	01
Goals 2: To promote nutrition and sanitation for good health for all in communities	09
Goals 3: To protect the environment and natural resources in green and sustainable ways	15
Goals 4: To promote community participation for the quality of education	23
Goals 5: To promote community development with the participation of PWDs	25
Networks and Other Activities	43
Financial Report	61
Donor and Government sector partners	62

Project and Programme in 2024



1

The Community-Based Inclusive Development project

20 villages in Chomphet District, Luang Prabang Province

2

Improved Cookstoves Programme Lao PDR

5 Provinces: Xiengkhouang, Luang Prabang, Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet and Champasak Province

3

Women-Led Business for Sustainable Livelihoods and Gender Empowerment Activities

4 Provinces: Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Savannakhet and Salavan Province

4

Capacity Building for Civil Society Organization and Community under Forestry Law Enforcement Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement

Vientiane Capital

5

Promoting the establishment of community forest protection areas and the sustainable use of natural resources

5 villages in Pathoumphone District, Champasak Province

6

Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire, and Local Livelihood and Market Linkages Project

5 villages Bachiengchaleunsouk district, 10 villages Pakse City, Champasak Province

7

Participatory Community Development for Livelihoods Improvement and Nutrition Promotion in Rural Areas Project II

10 villages in Kaleum and 20 villages in Dakcheung District, Sekong Province

8

Service Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities project

6 Villages in Samouay District, Salavan Province

9

The Laos Maternal Child Health and Nutrition Project

12 villages in Lamam District and 10 villages in Dakcheung District, Sekong Province

10

The Okard Capacity Strengthening on Disability Inclusive Development Project

40 villages in Nong and 45 villages in Sepon District, Savannakhet Province and 59 villages in Darkcheung district, Sekong province

5 Years of Strategic Goals (2021-2025)

And what is accomplished in 2024



Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
<p>To reduce poverty by improving food security</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 people received green agricultural business funds Provided 284 goats to 77 families Promoted rice cultivation to 45 families Promoted crop cultivation to 133 families Promoted local seed production to 12 families Provided 56,042 fingerling to 146 families Provided 150 local chickens to 15 families 	<p>To promote nutrition and sanitation for good health for all in communities</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1000 Days Family 282 families became model families 52 village volunteers were empowered 68 poor families and families of people with disabilities were provided with toilets 174 people were aware of faecal-oral transmission and how to prevent diseases 361 people (209 women) were informed about nutrition, health care and gender roles 	<p>To protect the environment and natural resources in green and sustainable ways</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted the planting of NTFPs and distributed 3,300 seedlings in 5 villages Promoted the planting and sustainable use of NTFPs to 57 families 208 people learned how to adapt and prepare for climate change Completed the establishment of 50 committees in 5 villages and regulations for the establishment of conservation areas and use areas 150 people in 5 villages learned about the importance of natural resources and related laws 	<p>To promote community participation for the quality of education</p>  <p>We don't have any project under this goal in 2024</p>	<p>To promote community development with the participation of PWDs</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 699 poor families and people with disabilities received income support 107 people with disabilities received assistive devices - assistive devices 338 people with disabilities received assistance with health services, treatment and rehabilitation 1,134 people trained in participatory community development for people with disabilities

Goal 1

To reduce poverty by improving food security

The livelihoods of rural Lao communities remain deeply dependent on natural resources and seasonal subsistence agriculture. While some families struggle with food insecurity that persists throughout the year, others maintain traditional farming and animal husbandry practices - often due to long-established customs. These conventional methods frequently yield lower productivity than modern alternatives, ultimately affecting community welfare. The resulting limitations in agricultural output contribute to ongoing challenges of food shortages and poverty at both household and community levels.



The ARMI has prioritized this issue to contribute to poverty reduction by improving food security in rural areas, ensuring gradual development, and continuing rural development to comprehensively address poverty. This is achieved through promoting commercial production, vocational training, and advanced technical skills to enhance productivity alongside creating stable and secure livelihoods. This approach not only reduces poverty but also establishes a solid foundation for rural communities, paving the way for a better and more sustainable future. In 2024, our contributions included:

Participatory Community Development for Livelihoods Improvement and Nutrition Promotion in Rural Areas (LAN II) has been implemented in 31 villages in Dak-Chueng and Kaleum District of Sekong Province (Project 7 on the map on page VIII). In 2024, the following actions will have been completed:



Promotion of Goat Raising:

- 284 goats (including 29 male goats) to 72 families across 3 villages.
- Supported vaccines and Injection syringe along with training on goat training and veterinary care, to 48 families.



supported and promoted the cultivation of organic rice

Provided equipment and rice seeds to 40 families.



Promotion of Fish Raising:

- Provided 56,042 fingerlings to 146 families (including tilapia, catfish, snakehead fish, and grass-eating fish).
- Supported 44 sacks of fish feed and fish pond construction materials (6 meters of plastic sheeting and 3 meters of shade netting per family).
- Conducted training on fish raising techniques, creating natural feed using locally available materials, feeding methods, water exchange techniques, and more.



Promotion of Integrated Crop Cultivation:

Provided compost bins, sugar, and plant varieties to 89 families. The plant varieties included lime, eggplant, home garden vegetables, and others. Conducted training on the production of bio-extracts and compost.

The Agriculture Learning Station of KangKia Community, which was implemented in Kang Kia Village, Bachingchaleunsouk District, Champasak Province. We have created a technical area to prepare and support the target group as a model in the management of manure management and production of bio-fertilizers and to transfer knowledge on how to produce integrated agriculture. in 2024 has been completed as follows:

Vegetable Cultivation:

- Promoted the cultivation of various vegetables such as cabbage, kale, lettuce, salad greens, and water spinach.
- Prepared planting areas for chili peppers, eggplants, tomatoes, and collected long bean seeds for future planting.

Earthworm Expansion:

- There are earthworm varieties and ensured sufficient compost for use in mixed crop cultivation.
- Distributed 1 kilogram of earthworm seeds to interested individuals for free.



Free-Range Chicken Rearing:

- There are 16 breeding chickens to serve as a learning model for rearing practices, while also generating income for families and expanding to target groups.

Promotion of Catfish Raising:

- There are 540 catfish (approximately 45 kilograms) within the center as a learning model, diversifying center activities.
- Future plan: Select breeds and sell catfish to generate income.

Tree Seedling Nursery:

- Germinated 1,000 teak seeds and 1,500 rosewood seeds.
- Propagated 50 bamboo seedlings by cutting and selecting mature bamboo for sale. Prepared bamboo for use in constructing trellises for beans, frames, and vegetable garden supports.

Integrated Agricultural Production Promotion Project Using Chemical-Free Waste in Champasak Province. The project has been implemented in 9 villages in Bachingchaleunsouk District, Champasak Province. in 2024 has been completed as follows:



Support for Home Vegetable Gardening:

- Distributed 11 varieties of plants to 5 families, including cabbage, kale, cauliflower, lettuce, water spinach, chili peppers, cucumbers, long beans, and eggplants.
- Conducted training on producing bio-compost from fermented liquid and techniques for planting and maintenance.
- Through follow-up visits, it was observed that 4 families had sufficient produce for consumption, while 1 family was able to sell their produce at the market, generating approximately 11,348,000 LAK in household income.

Support for Chicken Raising:

- Distributed 150 local breed chickens to 15 families.
- Training on chicken raising techniques.

Support for Catfish Rearing in Canvas Ponds:

- Distributed 12,917 catfish (approximately 60 kilograms) to 30 families, along with 60 sacks of feed and 27 sets of canvas.
- Provided training on catfish raising techniques.

Promotion of Bio-Fertilizer Production:

- Conducted training on the benefits of compost, methods of raising earthworms, and the advantages of bio-fermented liquid.
- Guided practical sessions on making compost, bio-fermented liquid, and earthworm raising.



In addition, we have also promoted activities of **Women-Led Business for Sustainable Livelihoods and Gender Empowerment Activities**. These activities are being implemented in 8 villages across 4 districts in 4 provinces: Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Savannakhet, and Salavan. (Project 3 in the plan on page VII) In 2024, the following achievements have been accomplished:



- Successfully organized guidance meetings and planning sessions for the implementation of activities to promote women's leadership and entrepreneurship in agriculture, alongside strengthening gender roles in their communities for sustainable livelihoods (WLAB). These sessions included guidance and planning for financial management, procurement, reporting, policy protection advice, designing online media, and developing various key activities.
- Conducted training on business planning, including budget management, digital financial knowledge and skills, participatory business models, marketing strategies, and market linkages for female and young women participants in Oudomxay and Savannakhet provinces. This aims to enhance their business ownership skills and leadership capabilities in the fields of agricultural production, handicrafts, and food processing.



- Successfully organized a small-scale funding competition to promote women's leadership and entrepreneurship in agriculture, alongside strengthening gender roles in their communities for sustainable livelihoods. There were 13 competing groups from 4 provinces. The awards were as follows: 3 outstanding winners received 6,000 each, 1 runner-up received 6,000 each, 1 runner-up received 4,000, and 4 consolation prizes of \$1,000 each.
- Completed financial training for all 8 business units that received funding. Participants attended in person, while others joined online. The team provided guidance on financial regulations, budget planning, monitoring, income-expense summaries, report preparation, and document archiving for the project.



Mrs. Vilayvanh Chanthanouvong – A Grantee of the Green Business Grant \$4,000

Mrs. Vilayvanh Chanthanouvong, 44-year-old, she married with three children (two girls), and now lives in Mai village, Bounneua district, Phongsaly province. Vilayvanh received a \$4,000 green business support grant from October 2024 to March 2025. She utilized the funds to build greenhouses and grow crops. Vilayvanh's interest in gardening began in childhood, as her parents were farmers. Her family struggled to make ends meet at the time. Despite their regular employment, they supplemented their income by farming and animal husbandry. Their garden had chickens, ducks, pigs, frogs, fish, vegetables, and other crops.



"I felt so happy, excited, and overwhelmed," Vilayvanh said. "From the moment I saw the announcement, I was determined to apply and follow up regularly. I never expected that I would be the only applicant from the Phongsaly Province to receive the grant. I practiced what I'd say several times to demonstrate my capability and devotion. In the future, I aim to inspire others by promoting and effectively practicing green agriculture."



07

"I enjoy this work because it generates income for my family. We eat what we grow, and selling the surplus helps support our family financially," Vilayvanh shared. Vilayvanh had always dreamed of expanding her farming efforts. When she learned about small grants for green businesses through a Facebook page, she consulted her husband and submitted an application. To her delight, she was selected as the sole recipient from Phongsaly province and participated in training sessions covering composting techniques, soil improvement, animal feed mixing, plant care, family work division, and income and expense management. Using the grant, Vilayvanh initially planned to build five greenhouses but managed to construct six. She now grows high-value vegetables that thrive in greenhouses, particularly those that are unsuitable for outdoor conditions or have long harvesting time."



08

Goal 2

To promote nutrition and sanitation for good health for all in communities

Due to the fact that malnutrition issues in rural areas remain more prevalent compared to urban areas, while 89% of the population has an acceptable dietary consumption pattern, another 11% of rural households consume food that does not meet nutritional standards. In 2015, approximately 35.6% of children under 5 years old were stunted, 25.5% were underweight, and 9.6% were wasted. As we know, rural areas are remote and, in some places, lack accessible roads, making public health services difficult to reach. This has led to the spread of health issues among children in the poorest households, which are three times more likely to be affected compared to wealthier families. Therefore, we have prioritized implementing activities that integrate nutrition promotion and public health development in communities to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition. This is one of the association's goals to contribute to such efforts. In 2024, our contributions include:



This goal contributes to the organization of nutrition and health strategies for the target community to have better health gradually and to contribute to the ninth 5-year National Social-Economic Development Plan (NSED-9) (2021-2025), which is mentioned in the output 1: More inclusive and better-quality healthcare services and nutrition under outcome 2: Improved quality of human resources to meet development, research capacity, science, and technology needs and create value-added production and services. In addition, it also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; SDG 3: To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; and SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The Laos Maternal Child Health and Nutrition project, is being implemented in Lamam and Dakchueng districts, Sekong Province. (Project 9 on the map, page VIII) the following achievements have been accomplished:

- Successfully conducted orientation meetings on model family approaches and introduced the project to strengthen maternal and child health and nutrition in Lamam and Dakcheung districts, Sekong Province, with a total of 27 participants (22 women).
- Successfully organized village-level orientation meetings on model family approaches in 22 villages, with a total of 797 participants (507 women).
- Successfully held school-level orientation meetings on model family approaches for village authorities, village volunteers, youth, and women's union representatives, with a total of 103 participants (53 women).
- Completed training on the use of tools related to model family approaches for village health volunteers (VHVs), with a total of 52 participants (39 women).
- Completed household surveys and data collection for children under 5 years old and the 1,000-day target group to encourage participation in model family activities. Distributed model family activity posters and collected data from 396 forms.



- Successfully piloted the Community-Led Solutions (CLS), with 32 participants (16 women). This enabled youth and women's groups to implement their own ideas, fostering understanding and ownership of promoting health service utilization at local facilities through hands-on learning with the project team.
- Successfully organized participatory community brainstorming meetings at the village level and idea-sharing meetings at the district level, with 95 participants (53 women). These meetings reviewed and presented learning outcomes, prioritized challenges, identified solutions, and co-created pilot activities for testing. Participants shared results, reviewed lessons learned, reported on village-level brainstorming activities, exchanged ideas (prototypes) from brainstorming sessions, provided recommendations, and supported the implementation of ideas for real-world testing in target communities.



The Strengthening the Implementation of the Lao National Nutrition Strategy project is being implemented in three districts of three provinces, including Vientiane Province, Bolikhamxay Province, and Xiengkhouang Province. In 2024, the ARMI will be responsible for monitoring and supporting capacity building for 9 Lao civil society organizations and 4 associations that have received sub-grants in the following topics:

- Successfully conducted quarterly meetings with 4 sub-grantee associations to report on the progress of project activities and plans for the upcoming month. These meetings involved the Community-Based Organization (CBO) and 4 sub-grantee organizations, discussing evaluation summaries and other matters, with a total of 15 participants (9 women).
- Participated in the pilot testing of tools for assessing the implementation of model nutrition village initiatives. Multiple stakeholders were involved, including CARE International in Laos, the Nutrition Center, the Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion under the Ministry of Health, and members of the National Nutrition Committee. A total of 45 participants attended (24 women).
- Monitored and supported sub-grantee associations by evaluating project outcomes with the executive board of the Community-Based Organization for Life and Environment in 5 target villages of the project in Phaxay District, Xiengkhouang Province. The meeting had 41 participants (21 women).
- Successfully held provincial project closing meetings in 3 provinces: Bolikhamxay Province with 60 participants (32 women), Vientiane Province with 70 participants (43 women), and Xiengkhouang Province with 84 participants (51 women).
- Successfully conducted the closing meeting for the ProCSpiNut project, with 70 participants (27 women) from teams at all levels.



“ Ms. Phimmasone Chanthamixay – A Grantee of the Green Business Grant valued at \$6,000 ”

Ms. Phimmasone Chanthamixay, 33, lives in Donexay village, Xay district, Oudomxay province, the owner of a sewing shop. Phimmasone shared that she has always been enthusiastic about beauty and design. This passion inspired her to think of ways to turn her interests into a source of income, leading her to study sewing. “At the time, I had little money, so I enrolled in sewing lessons and paid later. Compared to others, I had nothing—no money, no experience, and no sewing supplies. Every day, I leave home early and return at night. I worked so hard that my body was drained, but I persevered and learned step by step. I couldn’t give up since my mother was my main source of encouragement. “She was the force that motivated me to keep fighting,” Phimmasone explained.



Phimmasone often shares with her team that she wants to help Lao women improve their sewing skills. She said that stitching is unique to Lao women and is essential to keeping their culture alive. When she makes clothes, she constantly draws inspiration from Lao culture, especially traditional ethnic costumes. This helps to preserve traditions and ensure their longevity. Phimmasone also uses leftover fabric to make other useful things like dresses, hair ties, key rings, and children’s clothes. She said, “I’d always wanted to design women’s bags, but I lacked the necessary equipment and expertise. One day, I saw an announcement for a green business grant. I applied and was thrilled to win the first prize of US\$ 6,000. I’ll use the money to buy bag-making machines and learn how to use them properly.” She added, “My business is still modest, but I am proud that I am able to sustain myself, support my family, share my skills with others, and motivate Lao women to preserve our culture. I wish to set a positive example for people to follow by running a green business.” In the future, Phimmasone hopes her shop will be able to provide a comprehensive one-stop sewing service. She went on, “I want customers to come to my shop and get everything they need in one visit.”



“Now, my shop has been opened for six years. It is my main job and the main source of income for my family,” Phimmasone said. “I also design new costumes and teach sewing to students who wish to learn. So far, I have trained over 50 people. Many of them now work as full-time or part-time tailors to support their families. I’m extremely pleased and thrilled to see them prosper.”



Goal 3

To protect the environment and natural resources in green and sustainable ways

Since rural communities still rely heavily on agricultural production and forest resources for their livelihoods and as a source of food, natural resources, particularly non-timber forest products (NTFPs), have been declining each year due to population growth. Therefore, the ARMI Association has prioritized this issue as one of its key objectives to promote community participation in the sustainable management and use of natural resources. This contributes to disaster risk reduction, post-disaster recovery, and the implementation of green growth strategies and climate change adaptation.



This goal contributes to the ninth 5-year National Social-Economic Development Plan (NSED-9) (2021-2025) as follows: The first focus is on the management and sustainable use of natural resources, second is on green growth and addressing climate change; and the third is Intensify disaster preventive, management, and recovery efforts. The three aforementioned above are under the 4th outcome: Environmental protection is enhanced, and disaster risks are reduced. In addition, it is a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all, SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and SDG 15: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation; and halt biodiversity loss. In 2024, our contributions include:

Participatory Community Development for Livelihoods Improvement and Nutrition Promotion in Rural Areas (LAN II) has been implemented in 31 villages in DakChueng and Kaleum District of Sekong Province (Project 7 on the map on page VIII). In 2024, the following actions will have been completed:

Promoting Local Varieties Production:

- Completed signing agreements with 12 families to prepare for the distribution of equipment and local varieties, including rice, crops, vegetables, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

Building Community Capacity:

- Provided knowledge on adaptation and preparedness for climate change, with a total of 208 participants (57 women).
- Reviewed the understanding of the roles of village disaster management committees, building capacity in disaster risk assessment, creating prevention plans, response strategies, and more.

Promoting Sustainable Cultivation and Use of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)

- Conducted training on planting and maintenance techniques for NTFPs for 57 families. Included varieties such as rattan, bamboo shoots, ginger, wild ginger, and bamboo.
- 17 families have completed planting, 40 families are in the preparation stage, preparing land and sourcing seeds.



The Capacity building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire and Local Livelihood and Market Linkage. The activities are being implemented in 10 villages in Pakse City and 5 villages in BaChiang District, Champasak Province. In 2024, the following achievements have been accomplished:



- Conducted training on enterprise development, focusing on introducing participants to business development concepts and the Business Model Canvas (BMC), which includes marketing, production, organizational development, and financial management. A total of 37 participants attended.
- Conducted training on gender mainstreaming, emphasizing strengthening gender equality in the management of community forestry livelihoods and community forest enterprises. A total of 34 participants attended.
- Completed training on market development for communities in 15 target villages, with 31 participants (15 women).
- Organized a product exhibition in Pakse City, Champasak Province, to promote local products, with 83 participants. The event aimed to foster sustainable market collaboration alongside the promotion of sustainable forest resource conservation. It provided opportunities for small-scale community entrepreneurs to analyze market trends, respond to market demands, build close coordination networks, and understand access to financial support from various institutions.



- Facilitated the formation of community-based business groups (including weaving and handcraft groups), with a total of 36 participants. This included facilitating the selection of group leaders, committees, and members, as well as defining roles and responsibilities within the groups through consensus agreements. Official documentation was provided by the villages, and a framework for member names and responsibilities within the groups was established.
- Participated in a study tour and knowledge exchange in Indonesia, with 12 participants (7 women) from the Lao PDR. The purpose was to learn about livelihood practices and community enterprise development, sustainable harvesting and management of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and the development of community enterprise strategies to address challenges such as market competition, quality demands, and the use of innovation and local raw materials for modernized production.
- Participated in technical training on product transformation using bamboo and rattan in Hanoi, Vietnam, with 9 representatives from Laos. The training focused on learning about the development and diversification of bamboo and rattan products, as well as techniques for transforming these materials using machinery from community-based enterprises. Participants also learned how to utilize locally available NTFPs for producing bamboo and rattan-based products.

The project “Promoting the Establishment of Community Forest Protection Areas and the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in SePien National Park, Pathoumphone District, Champasak Province. The activities are being implemented in 5 villages in SePien National Park. In 2024, the following achievements have been accomplished:

Promoting Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) Cultivation:

- Distributed 3,300 saplings, and led planting activities in 5 target villages.

Committee Selection:

- Selected committees and drafted regulations for establishing village-level conservation and utilization zones.
- Established NTFP cultivation and value-added groups in 5 villages.

Knowledge Dissemination Meetings: Organized meetings to raise awareness about the importance of natural resources and relevant laws, including Decree 269/PM (establishing Sepien National Park), Decree 365/PM (addressing forest law violations), and Order 11/MAF (strengthening forest management and combating deforestation, land encroachment, and forest fires).



Technical Training on NTFP Cultivation: Conducted training in 5 villages covering NTFP planting techniques, soil preparation, seedling cultivation, maintenance, harvesting, propagation, and practical guidance.



The Improved Cookstove Programme in Lao PDR is being implemented in 5 provinces (the 2nd projects on the map, page VII). In 2024, the following actions were taken:



Supporting the producers:

- Produced and distributed 114,959 units of high-quality energy-efficient stoves to retailers and consumers.
- Supported producers with 13 sets of stove-making tools.
- Conducted training for producers to report results, address challenges, and share lessons on factory management, quality control, and production standards. This involved 34 producers across 5 provinces (Luang Prabang, Xiengkhouang, Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet, and Champasak).
- Provided production equipment to 34 producers and supplied stickers that meet energy-efficient stove standards.





Improved Cookstoves Promotion:

- Conducted roadshow campaigns, successfully distributing 2,117 energy-efficient stoves.
- Supported retailers, middlemen, and consumers with promotional tools, including shopfront banners, T-shirts, stove bags, stove cleaning cloths, hats, face masks, and stove leaflets.
- Completed the distribution of 2,202 high-quality stoves to disadvantaged target households.
- Organized sales promotion activities in collaboration with local women's unions, showcasing stoves at major events and conducting 10 stove demonstration sessions.
- Collected annual stove user data, fuel usage data, and organized community feedback sessions. Supported 260 households with subsidies for purchasing electric stoves as part of efforts to create smoke-free villages. Baseline data on the use of charcoal, wood, and electric stoves was collected from target households.



Testing:

- Submitted 135 stoves (including models PTT3, PTT4, WS3, WS4, and CQC) for laboratory testing.
- Completed soil sample testing at each producer's factory to inspect and test soil samples from each factory and site, while establishing relevant standards.
- Successfully supported the establishment of a new testing laboratory at the Department of Energy and Mines in Xiengkhouang Province.



Goal 4

To promote community participation for the quality of education

Rural communities, particularly those that are distant, continue to experience numerous educational issues. Because education is inaccessible, children and young people living in rural areas still have relatively low rates of attendance, school completion, and reading. Infrastructure issues are still not enough. In 2015, approximately 1,500 primary schools did not complete their grades. Therefore, this goal is to promote the participation of the community in quality education.



This goal contributes to the ninth 5-year national social-economic development plan (NSED-9) (2021-2025) as follows: output 2: Improved quality of all levels of education and conditions created for access to education to support readiness for regional and international integration and Industry 4.0, which is the outcome 2: Improved quality of human resources to meet development, research capacity, science, and technology needs, and create value-added production and services. In addition, it is a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”).

The changes of the teacher and the first grade students

Mr. Dam Phaivong (Teacher Dam) is currently a Grade 1 teacher at Sop Khoi Primary School, where he has been teaching for 13 years. In the past, I have never participated in training or capacity building before. I taught in a student-centered curriculum, taught in groups, asked questions, did not have any relaxing activities for students, and did not assign homework. I found that the teaching results were average, the students' learning process was not as active and effective as it should be. In addition, I encountered problems and challenges, such as: students are very slow learners. If I teach slowly so that students understand, the lesson curriculum will not be complete. My teaching is accelerated according to the prescribed curriculum, so I have weak students, which creates problems and challenges for me. My solution is to try to focus on weak students, such as giving homework, putting students in the front seat, and getting them to participate more. After the project came, I decided to join to build my own capacity in this area. I participated in training on many topics: child-centered teaching and classroom management, activity leadership skills and attracting children's interest in attending school, and topics on children's rights and child protection in schools and communities. In addition, I also participated in raising children's awareness from the project on access to hygiene and health education. After I participated in the training, I learned a lot and put the lessons learned from the training into practice in teaching, such as: creating activities before and after school, leading children to play games, sing songs, tell stories and draw pictures. In addition, I was able to identify which activities could be integrated in creating activities that were appropriate for each activity, such as: Math, using games about calculating numbers as activities to help students be active, etc. Which has been very successful, evident in the fact that students are more enthusiastic, active and interested, dare to express themselves, and the children's academic performance is much better.



“ I would like to thank the project for its care and support in many aspects, including capacity building, support for learning materials, sports equipment, and including improving desks and chairs, facilitating various facilities so that students have a greater motivation to learn and also have access to proper hygiene and nutrition. ”

Goal 5

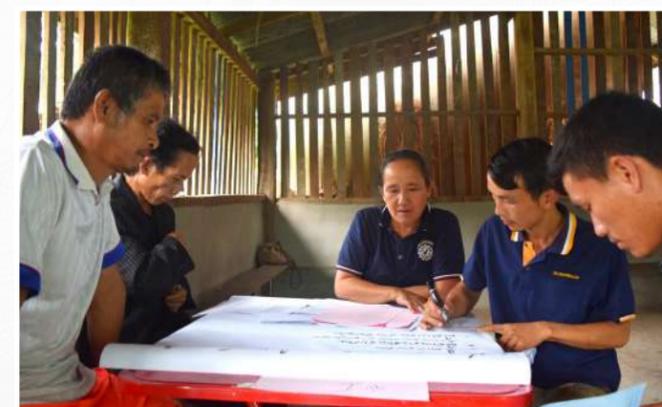
To promote community development with the participation of PWDs

The lack of full participation of persons with disabilities in families and communities is an issue that requires attention in national development. Often, persons with disabilities face discrimination and are denied equal opportunities to participate in various activities, both within their families and in society. They are frequently overlooked and face limitations in areas such as education, access to healthcare services, opportunities to contribute to their communities, and participation in social activities. This results in the denial of their roles and abilities in contributing to society. Participatory community development can help persons with disabilities live quality lives, enjoy freedom, access assistive devices, earn income to improve their livelihoods, and actively participate in building a stronger society. When persons with disabilities are given equal opportunities and rights, they can effectively contribute to societal development. Therefore, this goal is not only about assisting persons with disabilities but also about creating a better future for everyone!



This goal contributes to the ninth 5-year National Social-Economic Development Plan (NSED-9) (2021-2025) as follows: output 3: Promoting and creating the opportunities for women, youth, children, the disadvantaged, and the disabled to be developed and contribute fully to the development of the social economy; and output 5: Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance progressively accelerated and more lives made safe from UXO. Both outputs are under the outcome 3: Enhanced well-being of the people. In addition, it is a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries) and (SDG 18: Lives safe from UXO).

The **Community Based Inclusive Development** is being implemented in 20 target villages, Chomphet District, Luang Prabang Province (Project 1 on the map, page VII). In 2024, the following actions will have been completed:



- Distributed leaflets, posters, and USB drives containing audio clips to raise awareness and understanding of disability laws and policies among communities in 20 target villages. A total of 549 participants (303 women), including 62 persons with disabilities (45 women) attended.
- Conducted capacity-building training to enhance awareness and understanding of inclusive disability development, disability laws, and disability rights for persons with disabilities, their family members, and communities. The training involved 718 participants (376 women), including 231 persons with disabilities.
- Established self-help groups and improved their organizational structures to better align with their activities in 2 villages. The initiative involved 110 participants (66 women), including 29 persons with disabilities.

- Facilitated a study tour for 31 self-help group representatives (8 women), including 15 persons with disabilities, to exchange knowledge on agriculture, animal husbandry, handicrafts, market linkages, group management, and sustainable use of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). The study tour took place at agricultural and forestry technical service centers in Vangvieng, Viengkham, and Phonhong districts, Vientiane Province.
- Referred 4 individuals for eye examinations and assessed 60 individuals (24 women) with hearing and speech impairments.
- Referred 22 persons with disabilities (10 women) for cataract surgery to improve their quality of life and vision. Provided follow-up guidance to 19 individuals who underwent treatment to ensure they follow to medical advice and maintain good health.
- Provided 86 persons with disabilities (15 women) with assistive devices, including wheelchairs, crutches, tripod canes, heavy and light commodes, shower chairs, leg and arm braces, prosthetic legs, knee supports, and shoe inserts. Conducted regular follow-ups to ensure proper use of the devices and follow to medical recommendations.



- Conducted capacity-building training for 18 staff members (13 women) from the Luang Prabang Provincial Rehabilitation Center on assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and functional rehabilitation to ensure quality services for patients, persons with disabilities, and amputees.
- Conducted training on basket weaving techniques and provided equipment to 5 target individuals (3 women) from disadvantaged families and persons with disabilities. The training covered all steps of basket weaving in 4 styles: standard baskets, heart-shaped baskets, lidded baskets, and monk's alms bowls.
- Participated in establishing a referral network with hospitals and service providers for persons with disabilities at the Provincial Health Department meeting. The meeting involved 19 participants (5 women), including 1 person with a disability, alongside project steering committees and multi-sectoral partners.



- Conducted training on basic mental health and psychosocial support for 12 participants (4 women), including 1 person with a disability, to provide counseling and promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in community development and access to services.
- Completed the construction of new toilets and improved existing ones for 68 households. Built accessible and safe toilets in 5 village meeting halls to ensure persons with disabilities have convenient and hygienic access.
- Raised awareness on hygiene practices, open defecation reduction, handwashing with soap, and proper toilet usage among 474 participants (230 women), including 232 persons with disabilities (217 women).
- Participated in establishing a referral network with hospitals and service providers for persons with disabilities at the Provincial Health Department meeting. The meeting involved 19 participants (5 women), including 1 person with a disability, alongside project steering committees and multi-sectoral partners.



- Conducted training on income-generating activities, risk reduction, household and personal financial management for 236 individuals (148 women), including 78 persons with disabilities and 8 caregivers.
- Supported income-generating activities by providing equipment to 15 target individuals (from families of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged households). Activities included pottery, small grocery stores, barber shops, local snack production, rice noodle shops, tailoring, and furniture making. Distributed materials such as rice, salt, and more. Additionally, provided and installed shop signs to promote marketing for 5 families.





Supported income-generating activities:

- Promoted livestock raising among 64 target families (including persons with disabilities and disadvantaged households) to generate income. Distributed livestock breeds, including 96 goats, 55 pigs, 200 chickens, and 110 ducks.



Conducted capacity-building training:

- Trained 210 individuals (131 women) in animal husbandry techniques and 24 individuals (14 women), including 7 persons with disabilities, in agricultural techniques.
- Provided animal housing equipment, veterinary medicine, and animal feed to 213 individuals (99 women) who completed livestock training, including 64 disadvantaged families and 149 persons with disabilities.



“ The Success of Mr. Kham Maiy’s Goat Farming: A Heart That Overcomes All ”

When discussing about the persons with disabilities, many may assume they face numerous limitations in daily life. However, many persons with disabilities have proven that success is not determined by physical perfection but by a determined and resilient heart. This is the story of Kham Maiy, a man born with a physical disability who refused to let life’s challenges define him. Let’s follow his story: **Kham Maiy Inthavongsaeng**, 29 years old, lives in Na Hai Village, Chomphet District, Luang Prabang Province. His family consists of four members: his father, mother, Kham Maiy, and his younger brother. Kham Maiy has a physical disability. His mother, Toun Inthavongsaeng, shared: “During my pregnancy, I was often unwell and frequently hospitalized. Kham Maiy was born prematurely, which led to his disability.” When she learned of Kham Mai’s condition, she felt heartbroken, fearing he would not be able to support himself as he grew older. She wanted him to be independent so he could take care of himself when his parents were no longer around. Kham Maiy’s family relies on farming and livestock rearing for their livelihood, including raising pigs, ducks, chickens, and fish, as well as growing cassava, corn, and vegetables. However, due to financial constraints, they could only raise animals and crops on a small scale, often relying on cassava and corn to feed their livestock. Before the project’s intervention, Kham Mai and his family felt disheartened, as villagers often viewed Kham Maiy as less capable than others.



His mother recalled: “During community work, people would say Kham Maiy worked slower than others. But I saw his determination and patience. Even if he was slow, he always tried his best to contribute.” After the project raised awareness about disability rights and laws, the villagers’ attitudes began to change, and they no longer treated Kham Mai differently. The project began by collecting data and analyzing Kham Maiy’s situation to identify suitable income-generating activities for him. Despite his physical and cognitive challenges, the project team recognized his diligence, patience, and gratitude. They decided to support him with goat farming, providing him with 3 goats (2 females) in October 2023. Before receiving the goats, Kham Maiy’s family participated in goat-rearing training, as they had no prior experience.

Kham Maiy explained: ‘After my father attended the training, he taught me many things, like vaccinating the goats. I can’t do it myself due to my physical limitations, so my parents handle it.’ He also shared with the project team: “Raising goats requires careful attention. We let them graze only after the sun is up to avoid dew or wet grass, which can cause diseases like foot rot or bloating.” Kham Maiy diligently monitors and cares for the goats throughout the day ensuring they don’t wander into neighbors’ gardens or damage crops. Currently Kham Mai’s goats have produced 14 offspring (6 females), with one more expected to give birth soon.



The Okard Capacity Strengthening on Disability-Inclusive Development Project.

The project is being implemented in 40 villages in Sepon District, 45 villages in Nong District, Savannakhet Province, and 59 villages in Dakcheung District, Sekong Province (Project 10 on page VIII of the map). In 2024, the following achievements have been accomplished:

- Successfully conducted awareness-raising meetings on disability for village authorities in 3 districts, with 93 participants. The meetings aimed to help village authorities understand disabilities, their characteristics, challenges, and the process of collecting and compiling baseline data to identify persons with disabilities.
- Identified 522 persons with disabilities from 29 villages across 3 districts, with 615 participants (253 women) involved in the process. Piloted the identification of 82 persons with disabilities (35 women) to assess their individual needs and those of their caregivers. Tools such as health needs assessment, functional capacity evaluation, education, assistive devices, access to health services, and economic participation were used.
- Conducted training on intersectionality, inclusive development for persons with disabilities, and capacity building, with 9 participants (3 women).



- Conducted interviews and assessed the individual needs of 393 persons (189 women) from 29 villages across 3 districts.
- Selected 108 target individuals (451 women) and assessed locations for income-generating activities.
- Trained 43 participants (14 women) on inclusive communication and disability needs assessment tools. The training aimed to improve the team's ability to communicate effectively with target groups, understand non-verbal communication, and demonstrate inclusive communication through gestures and behavior when working with persons with disabilities and communities.
- Successfully celebrated the 2024 National and International Day of Persons with Disabilities with activities such as history sharing, student performances, video screenings, Q&A sessions, and exhibitions of assistive devices and local products. The event was attended by 385 participants (148 women), including 55 persons with disabilities (37 women).

The Service Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities is being implemented in 6 villages in Samouay District, Salavan Province. (Project 8 on the map, page VIII). In 2024, the following actions will have been completed:



- Conducted functional assessments for 132 persons with disabilities (60 women) by specialized medical teams to evaluate functional difficulties, assistive device needs, and health care information, confirming their disability status for cases the team could not assess.
- Trained 10 project staff members (2 women) on facilitation skills to understand beneficiary management processes and the use of community needs assessment tools.
- Referred 1 person with a disability for emergency treatment (high fever).
- Referred 14 persons with disabilities (8 women) for eye treatment, including cataract surgery, eye examinations, and eyeglass prescriptions, with follow-up assessments post-treatment.

- Referred 25 persons with disabilities (7 women) for health services, including hearing tests and ear treatment.
- Provided assistive devices to 21 persons with disabilities (7 women), including tripod canes, wheelchairs, heavy and light commodes, and sunglasses, with follow-up on device usage.
- Referred 20 persons with disabilities for ear treatment (ear infections).
- Provided hearing aids to 7 target individuals (1 female).
- Successfully established and selected self-help group leaders to promote opportunities for persons with disabilities to meet and exchange ideas. A total of 50 participants (32 females), including 20 persons with disabilities (15 females), were involved.





- Conducted capacity-building training to strengthen and enhance the living conditions of persons with disabilities. The training involved 36 participants (13 females), including 5 persons with disabilities (3 females).
- Interviewed and collected data on necessary materials and equipment for the education of 8 children with disabilities (7 females) to promote access to basic education.
- Provided essential consumer goods (rice and dry food) to 99 families of persons with disabilities to support their livelihoods. The distribution included rice, eggs, dried fish, salt, and canned fish.



- Conducted risk and feasibility assessments for income-generating activities for 36 individuals (16 females). These activities included animal raisings: fish, duck, chicken, goat; and small retail shops. Business plans were also drafted to improve the livelihoods of persons with disabilities and their families.
- Provided animal shelter construction materials to 19 individuals to improve their living conditions. Materials included timber and zinc sheets, along with guidance on construction and follow-up until completion.
- Distributed livestock (goats, ducks, chickens, and fish) to 19 persons with disabilities. The distribution included 31 goats, 60 ducks, 210 chickens, and 1,000 fish. Additionally, 30 bags of duck feed, 9 bags of chicken feed, and 8 bags of fish feed were provided. Technical guidance on rearing and regular follow-ups were also conducted.



“ Strengthening and Providing Equal Opportunities for Chanpheng, a Visually Impaired Woman ”



In our society today, everyone calls for equality and fairness, and persons with disabilities are no exception. This is especially true for those with visual impairments, a group that faces numerous challenges, obstacles, and barriers in their daily lives. Society becomes even more admirable when they receive support and appropriate assistance from their families, communities, and society at large. The following story is about a woman who once lived a normal life until an incident left her visually impaired. Let's follow her story: **Ms. Chanpheng Phatthana**, 66 years old, resides in Chan Tai Village, Chomphet District, Luang Prabang Province. Previously, she worked as a farmer, growing crops like cassava and sugarcane to make a living. Due to her advanced age, she no longer works and lives with her daughter and son-in-law. Chanpheng has been suffering from a chronic illness (psoriasis) since 2013, which has worsened over time. Additionally, she developed cataracts, causing her left eye to lose vision completely and her right eye to have blurred vision for many years.



“ My eyes are cloudy and I can't see anything. I can't go anywhere. Eating and drinking are burdens for my children and grandchildren. I can only see faint light. When someone visits, I can't recognize their face—only their voice. I don't know what to do. I have no money. I feel like my life is just darkness until the day I die. ”



Seeing her struggles, the project team visited her, discussed her situation, and coordinated with doctors to assess her vision. They scheduled her for cataract surgery (right eye). Initially, her family and Chanpheng herself were reluctant to undergo treatment or surgery because they had never done it before. She was afraid that the surgery would leave her completely blind. However, thanks to the team's persistent efforts to help her regain her vision and live a normal life, she finally agreed to the treatment. After the surgery, her right eye regained normal vision. “Oh, my dear, I'm so grateful to the project for helping me, taking me to the hospital for cataract surgery. Now I can see again, even if it's just one eye—it's better than being completely blind. I was so happy after the surgery at the hospital. I felt so relieved because I could walk on my own without waiting for someone to guide me. I was afraid of falling or tripping, but the doctors rushed to help me. I was so scared, but thankfully, nothing happened,” she said, laughing. This is the story of someone who simply wants to live a normal life in society. Persons with disabilities do not need pity from society—they need opportunities. Opportunities to live like everyone else. As fellow human beings sharing the same world, we must support and assist them as much as we can, so their lives can be filled with light and they can live equally in a fair society.

“ I'm so happy to be able to see again. This joy is incomparable. When I first saw my granddaughter, I didn't recognize her because she had grown up and her face had changed. When I realized it was her, I cried tears of joy. Thank you so much for helping me, for taking me to have cataract surgery so I can see again. This has given me the strength to keep living. I will live well and happily every day. ”

Networks and Other Activities

The ARMI takes coordination and participation seriously, consequently, we have joined a number of networks both domestically and internationally to facilitate the flow of expertise and information for organizational use. which in 2024 we have done as follows:



The Lao CSO Coordination Committee (LCCC) is a committee for non-profit Lao social organizations focusing on coordination and information exchange between members across the country, the government, and regional and international development partners. The Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI) is one of the Lao CSO Coordination Committees (LCCC) that has actively participated and contributed to all the work in the network mechanism in all 7 sectors: 1) good governance; 2) agriculture, forestry, and rural development; 3) education and sports; 4) public affairs; 5) environment; 6) labor, disability, and social protection; and 7) economy, information, culture, and tourism.



The ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) or ASEAN People's Forum (APF) is an annual meeting that is a platform for exchanging, sharing experiences, and discussing various issues related to achieving the United Nations goals for development in conjunction with the implementation of international declarations and ASEAN cooperation agreements among the civil society organizations (CSOs) in ASEAN countries. The Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI) has been selected as one of the Steering Committees of the Lao Social Organization or the Steering Committee of the ASEAN People's Conference, or ACSC/APF, to participate in the conference. We also contributed to our work as a secretariat by facilitating and preparing for delegations from Lao civil society organizations to attend the ACSC/APF meeting every year. In 2024, an event was held in Dili, Timor-Leste, where the ARMI team, along with a delegation of 20 representatives from Lao social organizations, participated actively. After returning to Laos, they also attended a results-reporting meeting and shared the lessons learned, collaborating with both government organizations and Lao social organizations.



The Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance in Lao PDR, also known as SUN CSA Laos: is a coalition of 60 social organizations in Lao PDR that support the government’s initiatives to improve nutrition work and the nutritional status of Lao PDR residents, particularly women and children, during the first 1000 days. ARMI became a member in 2017. Since joining SUN CSA Laos, we have actively engaged in meetings, shared knowledge, and brought a variety of lessons to utilize and implement in the association’s nutrition work. In addition, ARMI served as one of the administrative committees of the SUN CSA Lao network in 2022, and received the “Platinum Award” or the workplace award that promotes breastfeeding in 2023 and 2024.



Lao Civil Society Organization Forestry Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (Lao CSO FLEGT) is a group of Lao civil society organizations that have contributed to the process of joining the Voluntary Trade Agreement with the European Union (VPA). The goal of CSO FLEGT Laos is to participate and contribute effectively to the process of VPA/FLEGT between the government of Laos and Europe, ensuring that the communities that rely on forests can access, use, manage, protect, and develop forests in a fair and sustainable way. The program that implements the forest law, management, and timber trade is based on the



letter of approval from Forest Law No. 1278/MAF, dated September 23, 2015. ARMI has been a member of the CSO FLEGT Lao network since 2015. More importantly, in 2019, it was selected to be one of the members of the network’s steering committee. In the past, we have regularly participated in activities and meetings of the network, contributed to the FLEGT-VPA work, and participated in the process of obtaining legal timber definitions (TLDs); participated in the technical working group for community or village forestry; created and managed online social media (Facebook and YouTube); designed and produced print media and advertising materials for the network, such as brochures, posters, t-shirts, and websites; and contributed to the technical working group for community or village forestry.

Gender Equality

The ARMI considers the roles of women and men as the main heart of development. We believe that women and men have equal rights at all levels, which can be seen in every work and activity in each area, especially the leadership, regardless of the groups, which must have women at all levels in order to open up opportunities and promote women to play a leadership role and contribute fully. Implementation of family-level activities. We additionally encourage women to speak up, offer opinions, and make decisions alongside men.



The **Agroecology Learning Alliance in Southeast Asia (ALiSEA)** is a regional platform that emerged during the ACTAE project towards an agroecological transition in Southeast Asia and is coordinated by the CIRAD organization, which is responsible for all of the Network of Conservation Agriculture in Southeast Asia's (CANSEA) projects. The fundamental goal of ALiSEA is to exchange information and experiences regarding agroecology. As a new member of the ALiSEA network, the ARMI actively participated in the conference to share thoughts on the range of themes that were invited.



ARMI is one of the organizations that make up the Women's Role Development Association, a group that works to advance women. Additionally, we serve on the management board of the SUNCSA Nutrition Network, which emphasizes the integration of gender roles in nutrition work, particularly for women in rural areas who lack access to information about hygiene, childrearing (children under 1,000 days), or having an opportunity to attend school. Therefore, we have emphasized this issue in particular: building capacity and strength for women to have the right to learn and access good nutrition, encouraging pregnant women to go to the hospital, feed their children properly, eat food according to hygiene standards, etc. Particularly in ARMI, there are women in all fields of work at all levels, including the management board, the president, the inspection committee, and the members of the association. By the end of 2024, our organization will have 42% female members, and our staff members are actively taking part in training and developing their skills to increase their grasp of gender awareness and strengthen their knowledge of gender. In the future, we will raise the role of women and men to a higher level by integrating this work to reach more people in all fields of work.

Empowerment of people with disabilities

working on promoting the participation of people with disabilities is considered a work that ARMI experience more than 7 years. To improve the quality of life of people with disabilities in rural areas, especially those who have a hard time obtaining services and integrating into the community where they live, we have paid attention to and placed priority on their work. Therefore, we have included the work of disabled people in the association's 5-year strategic plan (2021–2025). In previous years, we have enhanced and supported disabled people in many cases, such as by promoting income-generating activities such as animal husbandry, barbershops, grocery stores, etc. so that they can have a career and can earn money for themselves and their families. Importantly, we also support people with disabilities to access services, send them to functional rehabilitation centers, and provide equipment and tools to facilitate their daily lives more comfortably. Additionally, advocate legal litera-

cy so that people are aware of and understand the rights and equality of those with disabilities, to create awareness about disabilities for the community, and to promote people with disabilities to live in society normally by participating in society equally. In the future, we will raise awareness of people with disabilities to a higher level by passing on knowledge and spreading the role of people with disabilities to other associations, this is not to be considered the work of any individual or any association, but it's the duty of everyone in society to comply with the words of the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, that "Leave no one behind". The association has always offered opportunities for people with disabilities to join and work in the association and has adjusted its policies to suit them. Currently, we have 4 disabled staff members, one of whom is an IT employee who is visually impaired. In the future, we will open up more opportunities for people with disabilities to work with us.



Climate change

Climate change is an issue that the world gives importance to, and we have given importance to this work because it is related to the lives of the people in the community, especially farming and animal husbandry, so that they can adapt to climate change and prepare to deal with various natural disasters. Additionally, some of our staff members have taken part in training to increase their capacity in the area of climate change, particularly with regard to methods of production that use little space but produce a lot of crops, as well as identifying good cultivars that can be grown all year round. We have also provided knowledge on handling natural disasters, especially in flood-prone areas, established village-level committees on natural disaster management, and trained them on how to prevent and reduce damage. Additionally, we have been urging them to create village conservation areas and protected areas so they can utilize natural resources responsibly. At the same time, we also encourage people to use more cookstoves in order to limit the usage of natural fertilizers from deforestation and prevent ecological system disruption by publishing and advertising in various villages in remote community areas that are still dependent on deforestation as a means of doing daily activities. In the future, we will continue to expand this work to more rural areas.



The ARMI takes coordination and participation seriously, consequently, we have joined a number of networks both domestically and internationally to facilitate the flow of expertise and information for organizational use. which in 2024 we have done as follows:



In March 2024, a training session on “Gender Mainstreaming” was held at the Cham-pa Grand Hotel. The event was attended by 43 participants, including representatives from the Forestry Department, the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office of Champasak, target communities, and the Rural Development and Rehabilitation Association. The trainers were from the Philippines: Ms. Tess Matibag and Mike Pa-dilla. The objective was to help participants recognize and understand gender roles.

In January and February, 2024, a training session on leadership strategies, action plans, and co-ordination frameworks was organized for Lao social organizations at the Vientiane Plaza Hotel. Approximately 15 participants attended, including government representatives and executive board members from various Lao social organizations that are members of FLEGT. The aim was to strengthen the capacity to draft proposals for the executive boards of Lao social organizations in implementing forest law enforcement, governance, and trade (FLEGT).



In March, 2024, the Participatory Development for Persons with Disabilities Project team in Chomphet District, along with the Head of the Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Department, the Head of the District Labor and Social Welfare Office, and the Deputy District Governor of Chomphet, participated in a study exchange program with Naman Seva Samiti in Betul, India. The study aimed to exchange knowledge on participatory community development and management, with a focus on persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups. Participants also learned about forming self-help groups in communities, establishing cooperatives to manage community funds, improving soil quality for better cultivation, and exploring agricultural and livestock value chains, including production and distribution processes at the community and national levels. This learning experience was highly valuable for researching and applying new ideas to the development of projects in Chomphet District, ensuring they are appropriate and yield positive results step by step.





On April 6, 2024, the Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI) held its Annual General Meeting for 2023 in Vientiane Capital. The event was chaired by Ms. Phetlamphone Phalakhone, President of ARMI, and attended by distinguished guests from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Vientiane Capital Women's Union, CBM, LCCC, APL+ Association, CHIAs, SAE-DA, as well as members, executive board members, audit committee members, staff, and volunteers from various regions across the country.



A total of 97 participants (including 42 women) attended, with 3 persons with disabilities among them. The purpose of the meeting was to report on the association's activities in 2023, highlight key achievements over the past year, and discuss various initiatives related to networks and activities supported by the association. This included assistance, monitoring, and support provided to target groups, with a total expenditure of over 22 billion LAK in 2023. Additionally, the 2024 plan was presented, focusing on the continuation of ongoing projects and activities in Xiengkhouang, Luang Prabang, Vientiane Capital, Vientiane Province, Savannakhet, Champasak, Salavan, and Sekong, as well as the expansion of at least 4 new projects. Following the meeting, a Lao New Year 2024 celebration was organized, during which blessings were offered to the association's executive board, members, partners, donors, and all participants. The atmosphere was filled with joy and excitement.



Participated in the Annual Meeting of Social Organizations and Prepared for the Annual Dialogue Between Social Organizations and the Government for 2022-2023 in Sangthong District, Vientiane Capital. The event was attended by 80 participants from associations, foundations, and social organizations. The objectives were to report on the implementation of the Secretariat and Coordination Committee's work plan for 2022-2023, discuss data collection and the preparation of reports on the contributions of social organizations to the National Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2022-2023, and prepare for the Annual Dialogue Between the Government and Social Organizations organized by the Ministry of Interior on May 10, 2024. Additionally, the meeting discussed future plans for the Coordination Committee and Secretariat, particularly focusing on communication work, such as managing websites, Facebook pages, member databases, and other related tasks for social organizations.



In April 2024, the Director of ARMI attended a Meeting of the Sub-Working Group on Public Administration Improvement and Public Participation organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). The meeting focused on a presentation about the database management system for handling petitions and statistics by the National Assembly's Standing Committee. Participants also discussed and reviewed the implementation of Decree No. 238 on Associations and Decree No. 149 on Foundations, presented by the Department of Development and Public Administration under the Ministry of Interior.

Director of ARMI, participated in the APF 2024 Regional Meeting in Timor-Leste in May 2024. This meeting served as preparation for the actual participation in September 2024. The event was attended by representatives from the ASEAN countries, including the host country, Timor-Leste, with over 60 participants in total. The Lao delegation consisted of 3 representatives, with Mr. Amphone Souvannalath, Director of ARMI, leading the Lao team.



In May 2024, the Director of ARMI participated in a consultation and planning meeting for the TICAFA (Trade and Investment Cooperation in Agriculture and Forestry) activities under the EU-Lao PDR Cooperation Program. The meeting aimed to enhance trade, investment, and sustainable integration in the agriculture and forestry sectors, focusing on conservation, sustainable forest ecosystem management, and biodiversity. The event was held at the Thang Hotel, Vientiane Capital.



The President and Director of ARMI attended the ASEAN Prize Symposium, an exchange of lessons on applying for the ASEAN Prize, organized by the ASEAN Prize Committee on May 20, 2024, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event was attended by nearly 200 participants, including representatives from ASEAN social organizations and relevant stakeholders.



The Second ARMI Executive Board Meeting for 2024 (2BM24) was successfully held. The objectives of the meeting were: to review the previous meeting, to discuss the activities of the ARMI Executive Board, to report on the association's activities up to May 2024 and present plans for June to September 2024, and to review and approve updated regulations.



In June 2024, the Director of ARMI attended a meeting of the Review and Revision Committee at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to discuss and provide feedback on the draft Decree on Associations and Decree on Foundations. The purpose of the meeting was to listen to the announcement of the decision approving the committee's establishment, report on the review status and plans, and seek guidance from the Decree Revision Committee on the Decree on Associations and Decree on Foundations.



In June 2024, the Director of ARMI attended the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Opportunity Project, aimed at strengthening participatory development for persons with disabilities. The MoU was signed between the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, represented by the Department of Policy for Veterans, Persons with Disabilities, and the Elderly, and World Education Laos. The event was held in Vientiane Capital and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Technical staff from ARMI participated in a consultation and knowledge-sharing meeting on the implementation of the Sub-Sector Working Group on Rural Development (SSWGRD) in June 2024. The meeting focused on: presenting the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Sector Working Group on Rural Development (SSEGRD), steps for data collection on poverty eradication and development under Resolution No. 348/LB, providing knowledge on contributions to rural development, lessons on forest conservation in rural areas, and wildlife and forest conservation in rural areas.



In June 2024, the Director of ARMI participated in the dissemination workshop on the ASEAN One Health Mechanism at the Lao Plaza Hotel. The workshop focused on presenting the national disaster risk management mechanism, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), response mechanisms, ASEAN regional disaster management, disaster response plans, and collaborative efforts between ASEAN and the United Nations (UN).

In July 2024, the Director of ARMI attended the celebration of French National Day, themed around the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, held at the French Ambassador's Residence. The event was attended by Lao leaders, the Lao Olympic delegation, diplomats, and prominent figures from the political, economic, and cultural sectors of France and Laos.



In August 2024, the staff from ARMI participated in a training and exchange session on Facebook page management for members of Lao social organizations and the ALIREC network. Discussions included creating engaging content, managing Facebook pages, best practices for using Facebook, challenges, and collaboration opportunities.



In August 2024, the staff from ARMI participated a training session on effective communication for researchers in the Lao PDR, held at the Vientiane Plaza Hotel in Vientiane Capital. The training aimed to learn and exchange knowledge on communication strategies for research, study, and publication through print media.



In August 2024, participation in the 5th ASEAN Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Implementation Meeting in Indonesia took place. The meeting aimed to discuss, exchange ideas, and plan for preparedness in addressing future disasters.



In August 2024, attendance at the Asia Nutrition Financing Conference: Capacity Building Workshop for the SUN CSA Lao Network was held. The purpose was to support participating countries in reviewing and strengthening nutrition financing plans, discuss opportunities for mobilizing domestic and international resources, and highlight the role of the Ministry of Finance. Participants shared experiences in nutrition financing and agreed on a vision for achieving sustainable nutrition financing in Asia.

In August 2024, facilitation of the Community Support Activities Review Meeting under the Lao CSO FLEGT Project (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade) was conducted. The meeting aimed to discuss and exchange outcomes of community activities, summarize results, identify solutions to challenges, and address issues in forest resource management.



In August 2024, facilitation of the Annual Meeting of the Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development Technical Working Group of Social Organizations was carried out. During the meeting, participants reviewed the group's achievements in 2024, discussed and revised the group's roles, and jointly developed plans and activities for the future.

Financial Report

Exchange Rate (KIP/USD) 21,583

	Amount (KIP)	Amount (USD)	Percent
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Opening Balance from 2023	2,313,664,223	107,198	
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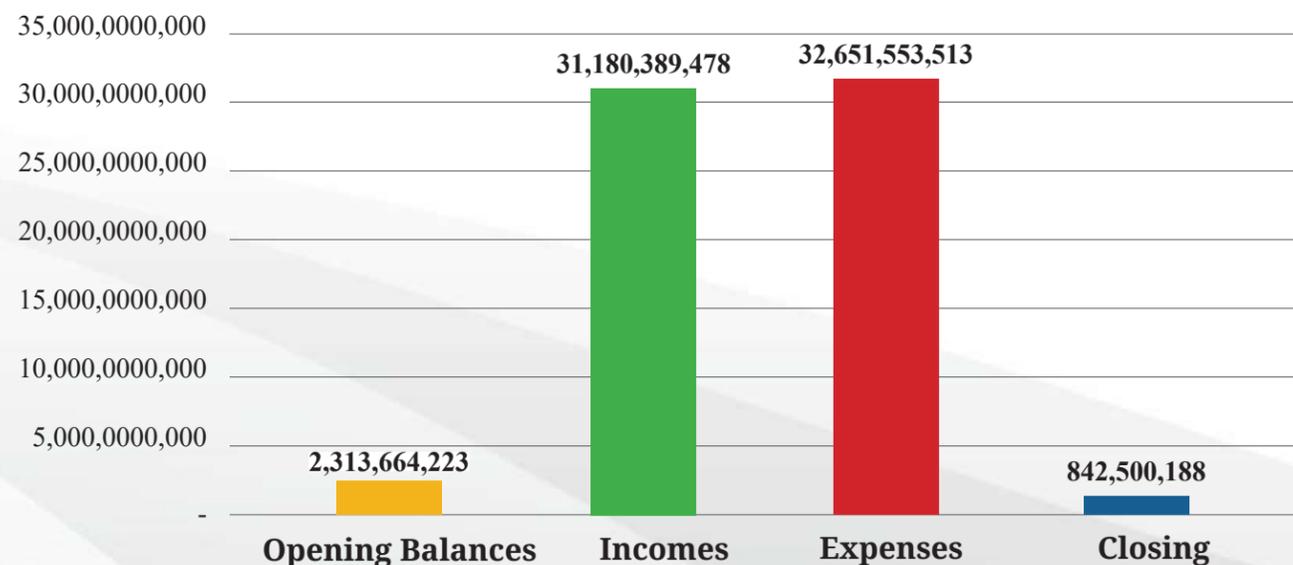
Incomes

Member Fees	62,984,417	2,918	0.2%
Funding from Donors, Individuals, etc.	30,943,053,672	1,433,677	99%
Bank Interest	1,564,568	72	0.01%
Other Incomes	172,786,821	8,006	1%
Total income	31,180,389,478	1,444,673	100%

Expenses

1) Administrative Expenses (employee salaries, water, electricity, office rent, etc)	8,095,466,054	375,085	25%
2) Project Activities	24,422,295,005	1,131,552	75%
3) Humanitarian Assistance	-	-	0%
4) annual financial audit fee	133,792,454	6,199	0%
Total expenses	32,651,553,513	1,512,836	100%

Closing Balance 2023	842,500,188	39,035	
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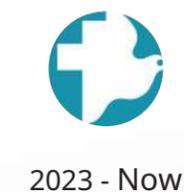
Government partners

In the past year 2024, the ARMI has been working closely with the government sector, especially:



Donors

The ARMI has a total of 11 donors, which include donors who give from 1–5 years, 5–10 years, and more than 10 years, as follows:





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