

ahan #5

newsletter 1st quarter 2022

Integrated nutrition for life-long impact



During the no-cost extension phase, the AHAN Project is strengthening its integrated-nutrition approach and multi-sector coordination to deepen the impact on the lives of the most vulnerable children and their communities.

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Integrated approach and multi-sector coordination:

two keys to sustain our impact on women and children's nutrition.



Phalaxay district, Savannakhet province.

Through the various components of the project, Mr. Sisavanh and Mrs. Thin received new knowledge and equipment leading them to nutritional behavioral changes: better feeding practices, improved hygiene, more involvement of Thin - his wife - in making decisions for their household and harmonious relationships as a couple... AHAN's integrated-nutrition approach has changed their life and enables them to dream bigger for the future of their children. All these changes are being cemented by handing over the project's activities to our government counterparts, increasing the chances of a sustainable change for the communities we serve.

Thanks to the No-Cost Extension (NCE) approved by the European Union and the Government of Lao PDR in the last quarter of 2021, the AHAN Project has entered its last months of implementation. This last phase of the EU's Pillar 3 of Partnership for Improved Nutrition (PIN) allows the project to cement all the life-changing impacts and complete unfinished interventions across the 124 rural communities in Savannakhet, Saravane and Attapeu provinces over the past three years.

To ensure the project's relevance to the needs of the communities in a fast-changing context, the AHAN Partnership project has agreed with the European Union and Lao Government stakeholders to focus on targeted activities enabling communities to sustainably improve their nutrition and health status over

the last months of implementation and beyond. A significant amount of the project's budget has indeed been repurposed to support the Lao Government's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including ways to prevent the spread of the virus (procurement of IEC materials, communication means for raising awareness, PPEs) or directly protect from it (support in rolling out COVID vaccination campaign). Improved hygiene, a key determinant to combat diseases linked to malnutrition, has also received a strong focus through this additional period of the project: 34 health centers are being equipped with new water systems and waste management systems including the construction of incinerators to prevent bio-hazards, the 24 community markets established by AHAN also feature toilets recently constructed to ensure better

sanitation in those public spaces, and families are receiving kettles and water coolers to fully enjoy the access to clean water and avoid waterborne diseases.

The impact of these new inputs, added to all the achievements from the past three years in improving the livelihood and agricultural techniques of the communities, their nutrition knowledge and access to quality health services and to clean water and proper sanitation, and the improvement in gender equality within couples are currently being assessed through the project's endline evaluation. This evaluation will be a key indicator to measure the success of the project in improving the nutrition of pregnant women and mothers, and children under five years old.

Among the keys to making the life-

Multi-sector coordination in figures

\$179K

Budget allocated for this project's component

12

District Implementation Management Committee established and meeting on a quarterly basis

and

03

Provincial Implementation Management Committee established and meeting every 6 months

to monitor the project's achievements at the sub-national level



the project phases out, particular attention has been given to building the capacities of the different ministries through provincial and district departments, involved in the project at various levels, and creating linkages between those ministries to build a common understanding on the multi-dimensional issue of malnutrition. Throughout the project's lifecycle, AHAN has been conducting regular Implementation Management Committee meetings gathering the Ministries of Health, Agriculture & Forestry, and the Lao Women's Union and Governors from the district to the national level to assess the progress of the activities. By inviting the key

sub-national stakeholders to visit the communities we serve, we created synergies that last and broaden the project's impact on the lives of the most vulnerable. In addition, AHAN has been organizing learning events on nutrition to exchange the lessons learnt from the project's implementation, inviting districts and provincial nutrition committees and other organisations to exchange their experience. A testimonial of the relevance of the project's activities to support the Government of Lao PDR in its journey towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, Ms. Keouangchay, District Health Officer from Attapeu Province says: "I am so grateful to be a part of the AHAN Partnership, I have noticed it brought many changes to communities in Sannakkhixay district. Mothers and pregnant women received the nutrition lessons and education on breastfeeding from the project, and the Mothers' Nutrition Groups are a platform to share this knowledge on nutrition, health and provide social support among its members. Mothers' Nutrition Groups are essential to improve communities' nutrition. At the end of the project, the District Health Office along with the District Nutrition Committee (DNC) will include the work into the district health implementation plan to monitor and support a sustainable impact on the communities".

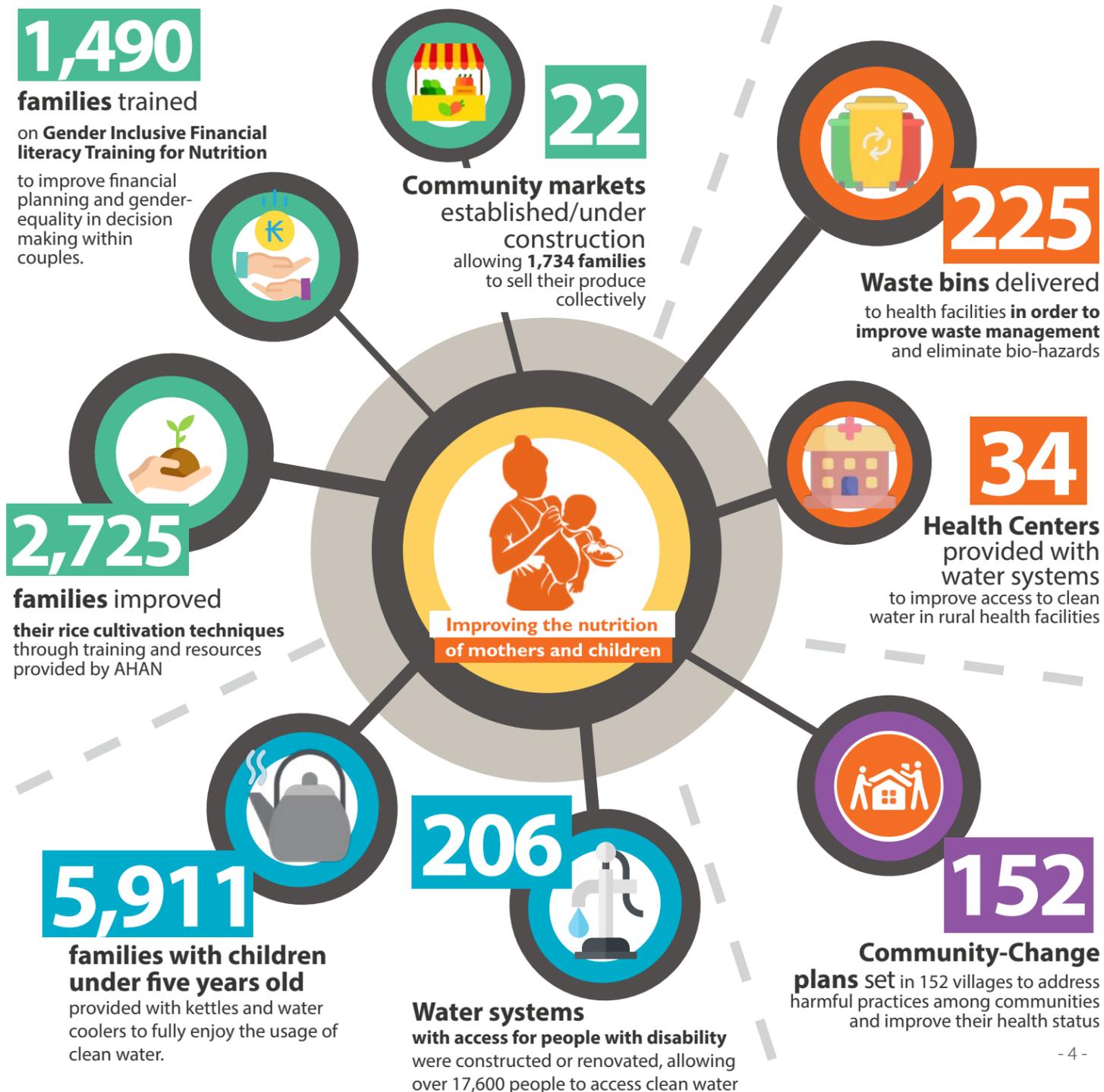


New agricultural inputs generating income and improving livelihoods, more knowledge to understand how our eating and feeding practices impact our health, improve access to clean water and sanitation, more equality between women and men... all these milestones to overcome malnutrition and break the cycle of poverty would not sustain without a strong multi-sector coordination and linkages between the various ministries of the Government of Lao PDR. We would like to thank all the 700 Government staff working hand-in-hand with us to improve the lives of the communities.

[Progress]

The visual track of the project achievements.

Find here some indicators of achievements from the beginning of the project to April 2022.



[Who are we?]

Portrait of our people.

This month, we meet **Phanmaly Siliphong**, AHAN Provincial Operations Manager for World Vision Laos.



“Thanks to the integrated nutrition approach and the continuous support and collaboration from our government partners and development partners, the nutrition status of vulnerable children and their communities in Saravane has significantly improved – this makes me truly proud to see our team’s hard work has paid off!”

Since the beginning of the AHAN Project in 2018, Phanmaly Siliphong, who is well-equipped with over 15-year-experience in the development sector, particularly in

the nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) field, has been our hard-working operation manager in Saravane province.

Aside from taking the lead in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the AHAN activities in Saravane, Phanmaly also coordinates and works closely with government partners and relevant civil society organizations, ensuring the Project’s specific objective #5 - Strengthened multi-sector coordination and support for nutrition - is being achieved. For instance, he plays a key role coordinating and representing AHAN at the Provincial Nutrition Stakeholder Learning Workshop (PNSLW).

The PNSLW brings everyone

working on nutrition in Saravane such as Provincial and District Nutrition Committee, INGOs, Civic Society Organizations etc., to share experience- both successes and failures - so participants can learn how to improve their nutrition activities, and get inspired.

“Last year, World Vision participated in PNSLW as a guest to share our expertise and AHAN best practices. But this year, we will take the lead in organizing the workshop. I am happy with our achievement so far, and excited to improve our work using lessons learnt from previous years and PNSLW so we can scale up our impact on the vulnerable communities!”, said Phanmaly with determinate eyes and a hopeful smile.



[Update]

The picture story of the past months.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic posts many challenges, it could not stop World Vision, AVSF and GCDA's commitment to helping improve the nutrition of vulnerable children and families in Laos through the AHAN Project. Adjusting to the new normal, over the last six months, AHAN was able to conduct various activities and brought about a lasting impact on the communities we work with.

Here are few illustrations of the past months' highlights.



In every AHAN activity, we take disability inclusion and gender equality into account, and the following Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) works are the perfect examples of that: women are involved in WASH awareness and improve hygiene practices by demonstrating a proper hand-washing method to the villagers (top image), New boreholes construction in the Phine district are designed to be disability-friendly by adding a ramp for wheelchairs and a two-ways swing door. Moreover, the pumps have a suitable height for children in the pumping of a maximum of 60 cm (bottom images).

All pictures from Phine district.

As Laos continues to fight COVID-19 pandemic, AHAN works shoulder-to-shoulder with the Ministry of Health to ensure the communities we serve are safe. For instance, we provided various equipment (trash bins, soaps, information posters) worth over 15 Million KIP to the Atsaphone District Health Office, Savannakhet province in March.

Handover of materials in Atsaphone district health office, Savannakhet Province.



As part of the AHAN activities funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Saravane province, at least 964 children together with their caregivers participated in the Go-Baby-Go (GBG) program, where they received a pack of toys (puzzles, balls etc) to play during group sessions activity, which help improve their parenting skills, family well-being and holistic early child development.

Saravane district (left), and LaoNgarm district (right), Saravane province.



AHAN end-line evaluation is underway!

On April 8, the virtual inception meeting brought together key stakeholders of AHAN, namely, the European Union, World Vision Australia and Laos, consultants, government partners, to discuss the Project's end-line evaluation parameters; while also enabling relevant parties to provide input thus ensuring the smooth and successful closing of the Project (top right picture).

Our Monitoring and Evaluation team is working tirelessly to ensure the end-line result is being effectively and accurately obtained by providing training to relevant parties. For instance, the Endline Field Supervisor training took place in Savannakhet province after Lao New Year's break.

[In case you missed it]



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International Women's Day: More Gender Equality Means Better Nutrition for Rural Women and Their Children.

March 8th celebrated women around the world and raises awareness of gender equality. In Laos, AHAN targeted communities in southern provinces show promising change toward a more equitable and harmonious relationship between husband and wife.

To learn more, [click here](#)

My Wish for A Better WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)

Children suffer after drinking dirty water, mothers experience miscarriage after fetching water for kilometers loaded with heavy buckets, and people live in unclean and dangerous environments due to defecation - these issues have been gradually eradicated thanks to AHAN WASH Project.

Watch the video: [click here](#)



Mothers and children's health are monitored by health professionals with the mobile clinics.

Over 14,000 households attended outreach health activities in the 124 villages supported by the Accelerating Healthy Agriculture and Nutrition Project (AHAN) in Savannakhet and Saravane provinces, including 7,500 households with children under five years old.

Discover the full story: [click here](#)



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