



COUNTRY PROFILE

JUNE 2008



USAID supports community behavior change programs in Laos that teach methods to prevent the spread of avian influenza.

LAOS SNAPSHOT

Year of independence: 1949
Population: 5.924 million (2006)
Source: World Development Indicators

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/laos/

OVERVIEW

Since the mid-1980s the people of Laos have experienced a gradual transition from a centrally-planned economy to an increasingly market-



oriented financial system. The country still faces serious infrastructure and human capacity challenges, however. The Government of Laos recognizes the need for technical assistance, training and investment in order to modernize its economy and address critical health, education and employment issues, and has welcomed

USAID programs designed to address these needs.

PROGRAMS

PEACE & SECURITY: ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

USAID provides technical assistance to develop silk production as a viable economic alternative to opium production, enhancing the livelihoods of poor farmers in northern Laos. The program promotes the formation of village clusters, where producers and buyers can benefit from reductions in marketing costs while raising the quality of yarn and textiles. It also introduces microfinance via savings and lending groups.

PEACE & SECURITY: UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

USAID provides assistance to improve the quality of medical services for victims of unexploded ordnance (UXO) that remains from the Indochina conflict more than 30 years ago. The program also promotes risk reduction through outreach and education about the dangers of UXO for children and communities. In addition, USAID seeks to improve the quality of life of people living with disabilities from UXO by working toward the development of effective and sustainable national policies.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: SUPPORTING WAR VICTIMS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

USAID develops community resources for people with disabilities by addressing their rehabilitative requirements as well as their social and

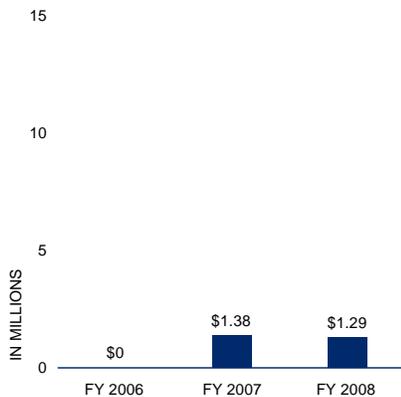


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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID ASSISTANCE TO LAOS



Funding Source: Economic Support Funds & Child Survival and Health Funds

For more information, see the
FY2009 Congressional Budget Justification
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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economic needs. USAID promotes income generating activities, advocacy, awareness, educational and vocational opportunities, and integration into community life for people with disabilities.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

USAID aims to strengthen inclusive education in Laos to ensure that children with disabilities are able to attend and succeed in school. Working with teachers and administrators in primary and preschools, the program promotes the development of education resources and local expertise, strengthens community networks, and promotes advocacy to increase social awareness with respect to disabilities.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

USAID undertakes activities in Laos to reduce the incidence of tuberculosis, malaria and dengue fever as part of its regional health program. It is providing regional technical assistance on various aspects of drug quality assurance including drug control management systems, laboratory testing methods, confirmation testing, good manufacturing practices, and bioavailability studies. USAID seeks to reduce the incidence and to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on at-risk and infected people and their families. The Avian Influenza program strives to contain the H5N1 virus within the animal population, as well as help the country prepare for a pandemic by strengthening response capabilities.

ECONOMIC GROWTH: TRADE REFORM

USAID provides technical assistance and training to the Government of Laos in implementing reforms necessary to gain accession to the World Trade Organization, implement the U.S.-Lao PDR Bilateral Trade Agreement, and collaborate in the development of an ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.

ECONOMIC GROWTH: ENVIRONMENT

USAID provides technical assistance and supports the Government of Laos in collaboration with other countries in the region to promote responsible timber trade and the sustainable management of forest resources and biodiversity; to combat illegal wildlife trafficking; and to promote the adoption of improved conflict management policies, plans and mechanisms within the Mekong River Basin.