

## UNICEF Lao PDR

### Consolidated Emergency Report 2018

Grant SM189910



Mitsamphan Secondary School Camp, Attapeu province, Lao PDR

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Prepared by:  
UNICEF Lao PDR  
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## A. Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFS	Child Friendly Space
DESB	District Education and Sports Bureau
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DHHP	Directorate of Health and Hygiene Promotion
ECD	Early Child Development
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LWU	Lao Women's Union
MAM	Moderately Acute Malnutrition
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MICT	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MUAC	Mid-Upper Arm Circumference
NDPCC	National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Government Organisations
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
PA	Pedagogical Advisors
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PESS	Provincial Education and Sports Services
RUTF	Ready to Use Therapeutic Food
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
TLC	Temporary Learning Spaces
UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

## B. [Executive Summary](#)

The year 2018 saw one of the worst disasters in Lao PDR, affecting Attapeu Province. Two months of excessive rain that caused overflow of the Saddle Dam D on 23 July 2018 brought massive flash floods across eight villages in Attapeu. The dam collapse displaced 7,068 people, including 3,038 children, who were camped in temporary shelters. With Sanamxay district being the most severely affected, displaced families were temporarily settled across six emergency camps.

As a response, UNICEF worked with the Lao PDR Government and various development partners to provide cross-sectoral support to the effected populations. UNICEF immediately deployed teams to bring essential life-saving interventions in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and nutrition, education, and child protection to the affected sites.

UNICEF supported the joint rapid assessment and has been active in the UN Humanitarian team, leading the WASH and Education clusters, co-leading Child Protection and Nutrition clusters, and actively participating in the Health and Shelter clusters. UNICEF also provided technical and financial support to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and worked closely with provincial authorities to resume regular programming in its areas of concern, ensuring the humanitarian-development nexus.

UNICEF provided essential WASH supplies to the evacuees, constructed key sanitation and hand washing facilities, and continuously provided key information since the onset of the emergency. As WASH Cluster lead, UNICEF organised regular meetings to coordinate the emergency response. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), the PDNA was conducted with support from the UN, the World Bank, and non-government organisation partners. UNICEF also led the WASH and Education components of the PDNA, conducting field assessments in six provinces, and producing the reports.

UNICEF worked closely with health and nutrition partners, the World Health Organization, UN Population Fund, and the Ministry of Health at central and provincial/district levels to deliver emergency health and nutrition interventions, including key support in coordinating the response with the MoH. From among the children targeted for appropriate care and treatment, 1,361 were screened for acute malnutrition; of whom, 154 children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 21 with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were identified, and referred for treatment.

Health interventions also included an integrated outreach for promoting health and nutrition activities and management of diarrhoea and pneumonia. UNICEF procured 50 cartons of Ready-To-Use-Therapeutic Food (RUTF); with a total of 7,500 sachet packs distributed to treat the 154 MAM and 21 SAM cases. UNICEF also provided support to 5,411 caregivers of under-5 children for infant and young child feeding and health and hygiene promotion.

UNICEF's central role as the Education Cluster lead in the emergency in Attapeu contributed to ensuring that children affected by the flood received continuous care and learning in safe and secure environments. Through the Ministry of Education and Sports' (MoES) "Back to School" initiative, UNICEF supported the timely enrolment and continued schooling of school-age children; as well as attendance in the temporary learning spaces. In partnership with international NGOs Save the Children, Plan International and ChildFund, a total of 3,039 children participated in six Child Friendly Spaces (CFS).

The Education Cluster was acknowledged as a best-practice model in delivering harmonised emergency assistance, and UNICEF's active work led resulted in mobilising additional resources to respond to the

sector's humanitarian needs through UNICEF, including from the Australian government and Irish Aid.

In addition to CFS services, UNICEF has been working with the District Labour and Social Welfare staff to identify the most vulnerable children in the camps especially orphans and children with disabilities. With additional funding from the Korean Government, UNICEF is modelling a community-based support mechanism to families caring for orphans and vulnerable children in Attapeu Province as part of child protection system strengthening.

A media visit was organised in August in Sanamxay district to showcase the response efforts with a focus on health, nutrition and WASH interventions. Five media outlets were represented, and more than 15 articles were generated. In the aftermath of the floods, Social Behaviour Change Communication activities were organised to promote hygiene practices and breastfeeding in the context of the emergency with affected populations, and content was disseminated through online channels. Moreover, the UNICEF Lao Country Office facilitated the visit of the Australian Ambassador and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) staff members to Sanamxay to witness first-hand how UNICEF interventions have reached the communities that were in need the most.

UNICEF Lao PDR is grateful for the immediate support provided by the Australian Government to contribute to the emergency response and recovery in Attapeu for Nutrition, Education, and Child Protection – which generated additional funding from other development partners to scale up the efforts.

### **C. [Humanitarian Context](#)**

Three disasters affected Lao PDR in 2018: Tropical Storm Son-Tinh on 18-19 July followed by the flash floods on 23-24 July caused by the breach in the Xe pien-Xe Nam Noy hydropower saddle dam, and Tropical Storm Bebinca on 17-18 August. The floods alone had caused widespread damage, destroying livelihoods and disrupting economic activity and social conditions; and affected 616,145 people across 17 provinces and Vientiane Capital's 90 districts. This resulted in 56 fatalities and 35 people missing, 1,620 houses destroyed, and 102,481 hectares of land heavily damaged.

The flash floods in Sanamxay District that started on 23 July was the worst disaster the country has faced in years. The two months of excessive rain and subsequent overflow of the Saddle Dam D affected 14,440 people in eight villages in Attapeu, of which 7,068 (3,463 male and 3,605 female) were displaced and camped in temporary shelters. This included 3,038 children aged 0-17.

The Government, through the National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee (NDPCC) chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, responded immediately and welcomed international support on 25 July 2018. The international development partners and the Humanitarian Country Team augmented the national response efforts.

The floods have had serious implications for Lao people and society. Unless adequately addressed, loss of income from the destruction of farms and micro-enterprises, coupled with the disruption of social services, will exacerbate existing nutrition, health, and education challenges. Any reduction in income would adversely affect expenditure particularly on nutrition among rural population, of whom 14.2 per cent are estimated to be food-insecure. In some affected areas, incidences of malnutrition, dengue fever, pneumo-bronchitis, common colds, diarrhoea with blood and severe dehydration, and skin diseases have increased.

This unprecedented emergency led to some challenging child protection concerns. High rates of psycho-social distress have been detected among internally displaced children, compounded by many parents and caregivers' inability to meet the basic needs for their children and for themselves. The MoLSW had identified 58 children who lost their parents in six of the worst-hit villages in Sanamxay District. These unaccompanied or orphaned children are the most vulnerable and need special attention due to risks of abuse, exploitation and trafficking. Children also lost their school uniforms and learning materials, which would result in skipping classes if sources of family income are not immediately restored.

Government's limited financial and human resources pose challenges to provide psycho-social support, identify child protection cases and offer quality and timely services to vulnerable children and their families. The overall capacity of frontline workers to cater to a wide range of psycho-social needs is low due to the voluntary nature of the job, heavy workload, and a high turnover rate. There is a lack of good coordination between government service delivery agencies and relevant stakeholders for children in need of protection services, considering the multi-sectoral nature of child protection.

For families who lost their livelihood, there was a sharp increase in debt among 70 per cent of those who normally have debts already; mostly for their agriculture inputs in the year's farming cycle, when the floods occurred.

#### **D. Humanitarian Results**

##### **WASH Activities**

- Constructed 14 boreholes with electric and hand pumps, and 25 pour-flush toilets for the displaced population in evacuation camps around Sanamxay.
- Provided support to install three electric pumps with water taps extension in city evacuation camps, and 24 bath cubicles and eight hand washing tables for boys and girls in the evacuation camps.
- Coordinated with the Directorate of Health Hygiene Promotion (DHHP) and the WHO to construct an incinerator for medical waste disposal at the health facility for temporary use.
- Printed and distributed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to raise awareness on hygiene and sanitation and prevent an outbreak of water-borne diseases.
- Supported the Provincial Health Hygiene Promotion Team to conduct two rounds of hygiene promotion outreach and distribution of IEC materials in all the 12 emergency camps.
- Provided 200,000 chlorine tablets (17mg NaDCC: 1 tab to disinfect 5 litres of clear water).
- A PDNA was conducted under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with support from the UN, World Bank, the EU and NGO partners. UNICEF led the WASH component of the PDNA, conducting field assessments in six provinces, across three regions (Northern Provinces: Xiengkhuang and Huaphanh; Central Provinces: Savannakhet and Khammoaune; Southern Provinces: Champasak and Attapeu). A draft report for WASH was produced
- Follow-up and monitoring of WASH interventions along with other supporting agencies in city and remote camps.

##### **WASH Results**

- 7,068 of the displaced populations received essential WASH items such as water buckets, jerry cans, tarpaulins, water purification tablets, soaps and IEC materials; and now have access to water points, latrines, bath cubicles and hand washing facilities in six camps in Sanamxay District.
- Intensive emergency WASH interventions and outreach activities targeting displaced population in remote and city camps resulted in reduced diarrhoea cases.



- Children in Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) and schools have access to handwashing facilities with soap.
- The displaced population in all 12 emergency camps acquired more knowledge on the importance of clean water, access to sanitation facilities and hygiene services, and preventing water-borne diseases.

#### **Nutrition Activities:**

- UNICEF carried out a rapid assessment within the first four weeks of the emergency, including the screening of children aged below 5 across seven evacuation camps for acute malnutrition.
- At least 25 health workers and 15 health volunteers trained to manage moderate and severe acute malnutrition using the national integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) guidelines.
- UNICEF supported seven Camp Health Post teams to actively screen children aged 6-59 months for acute malnutrition; and to set up reporting and procedures, and case referrals.
- Technical assistance was provided to medical and nursing staff at the Attapeu Provincial Hospital and the Sanamxay District Hospital for in-patient care for severe acute malnutrition with complications, out-patient care, and follow-up with children treated with RUTF.
- Medical outreach teams visited the camps to monitor the treatment of children identified with severe or moderate acute malnutrition.
- Outreach activities were conducted in all the camps and non-affected villages of Sanamxay District to provide family planning counselling, ante-natal care services, child growth monitoring, distribution of micronutrients, and deworming medication.
- Camp health teams were trained to support breastfeeding women either through the promotion of early initiation among those giving birth, or encouraging those who already breastfeed to continue.
- The MoH ordered the Sanamxay District to cease accepting infant formula donations as part of the policy and overall strategy to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in emergencies.
- Distribution of 50 portable speakers to the evacuation camps and health facilities in Sanamxay District. These speakers were used to broadcast key messages on available health services, safe motherhood, newborn danger signs, breastfeeding and complementary feeding, hand washing with soap, hygiene and sanitation, and health-seeking behaviour.
- The Food Security and Nutrition Clusters met on a weekly basis, improving coordination and targeting of children in need.
- From October to December, the weekly screenings as part of early recovery phase transitioned back to the regular monthly integrated health outreach services.

#### **Nutrition Results:**

- In total, UNICEF reached 1,361 children aged 6-59 months, and 5,411 caregivers of children below 5.
- Improved capacity of health workers and health volunteers for routinely and actively screening and processing the referral of children with acute malnutrition on a weekly basis.
- From 1,929 children aged 6-59 months targeted for appropriate care and treatment, a total of 1,361 were screened for acute malnutrition; which resulted in identifying, referring and treating 154 children with moderate (MAM) and 21 with severe acute malnutrition (SAM).
- Procurement and distribution of 50 cartons of RUTF: A total of 7,500 sachet packs were distributed to treat the identified 154 MAM and 21 SAM cases.
- There were no reported deaths due to acute malnutrition throughout the emergency response.
- Two paediatricians from Attapeu Provincial Hospital and four medical staff from Sanamxay District Hospital acquired further skills and knowledge in administering hospital-based treatment of SAM.
- A total of 5,411 caregivers of under-5 children received support for infant and young child feeding and health and hygiene promotion.

- A data system in collecting, recording and reporting acute malnutrition screening was used to allocate staff to camps with SAM cases and identify the capacity gaps. Data has also been made available to and utilised for improved programming.
- Medical teams' weekly screening in camps and host communities, as well as the increased distribution of key messages, increased uptake of health services among affected population and improved overall understanding of safe motherhood, newborn danger signs, breastfeeding and complementary feeding and care practices, and health and hygiene practices.
- Malnutrition, both MAM and SAM, is being effectively addressed and managed in affected areas.
- Increased access to services, including in-patient and out-patient care, among affected populations.
- Strengthened and more effective coordination among nutrition actors; as well as improved linkages with other sectors, such as WASH, child protection, health, and education.

### **Child Protection Activities**

- Since the onset of the emergency, UNICEF and partners worked to provide child protection services to prevent, monitor, and respond to violence, abuse, and exploitation of children. Overall emergency response is coordinated by the Government, with UNICEF as lead agency in Child Protection with the participation of partners such as Save the Children, Plan International and ChildFund.
- One key intervention was to support the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), MoLSW and the Lao Women's Union (LWU) to establish Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in six camps in Sanamxay District. Along with the Education cluster, and in working with the MoFA and NGO partners, the CFS were set up and began operating in emergency camps in August 2018.
- From August to December 2018, an average of 270 children aged 3-18 attended six Child Friendly Spaces daily; with a cumulative number of 3,039 (1,550 girls and 1,489 boys). In working with the Education cluster, they have been provided opportunities for active engagement, on a daily basis, through activities that foster learning and developmental growth.
- In partnership with the MoES, LWU, MoLSW and Mercy Malaysia, UNICEF supported a series of trainings for local community leaders and frontline workers in Vientiane Capital and Attapeu Province to equip them with necessary skills and knowledge to better respond to the protection and psycho-social needs of children and their families.

### **Child Protection Results**

- A total of 110 (43 male, 67 female) local leaders and frontline workers received training on CFS management, mental health counselling and psycho-social first aid; identifying and referring at-risk children and families, and on child protection issues and child safeguarding.
- Overall, the content of the training modules was greatly appreciated, especially in boosting frontline workers' self-confidence.
- The 270 children who attended six Child Friendly Spaces the CFS activities received psycho-social support, helping them regain a sense of normalcy and recover from the harsh conditions they face(d).
- Children with disabilities were also provided access to and interacted with other children.
- The CFS served as temporary learning place for them to learn school lessons and about good hygiene practices; and as a platform to identify vulnerable children and refer them to other appropriate services, including health, nutrition and education.

### **Education Activities**

- Real-time data was collected on affected school-age children, teachers, school facilities and learning materials; informing the response and recovery plans.

- UNICEF also supported the continuous monitoring and updating of data on the school registration and operations, working with the Sanamxay District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB) and Attapeu Provincial Education and Sports Services (PESS). These enabled the PESS/DESB's district and provincial offices to plan flexibly, and cope with unpredictable situations on the ground.
- To fill the immediate needs for school facilities after the disaster, Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) in six locations in Sanamxay were set up. School tents, furniture and teaching-learning materials were procured for the TLS, benefiting around 600 pre-primary and primary students.
- Supplies were procured and distributed, based on the MoES' request, to kindergartens, pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary schools and TLCs in Sanamxay. These included textbooks and teacher guides, procured from UNICEF's own funding sources; ECD toolkits for all kindergartens and pre-primary schools; around 1,500 school bags (using other UNICEF's own funds); and 10 sets of computers and printers given to schools (also UNICEF-funded).
- Significant coordination was made between schools and CFS, whereby the latter currently operates even in after-school hours and on weekends to complement regular school activities and child care.
- In November 2018 the Attapeu PESS and Sanamxay DESB received orientation in effective education programme planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- In January-February 2019, through DESB and PESS, in-service training for all 26 pre-primary teachers in Sanamxay was given with a focus on effective teaching methodologies, classroom management and monitoring of children's learning and development.
- Throughout the current school year continuous support has been provided on systematic outreach to pre-primary and primary schools, for monitoring and coaching/mentoring support to school teachers and principals.
- Extensive support was provided to MoES in coordinating the Education cluster's emergency response and early recovery. As cluster lead, UNICEF's support enabled the MoES and development partners to respond in a timely and harmonised approach. Key results of the joint actions include Rapid Assessment, Back to School, CFS and the PDNA.

## **Education Results**

- UNICEF's rapid assessment and support to MoES' "Back to School" initiative ensured the enrolment and continued attendance of 9,600 children from Early Childhood Education to upper-secondary schools; and the schools' continued operationalisation for the new academic year.
- Data was fully utilised to inform the DESB, PESS and MoES's education planning, keeping their plans relevant and effective in responding to the rapidly changing situations on the ground. By October 2018 schools in Sanamxay across all phases/levels have resumed full operations.
- Kindergartens, pre-primary, primary, lower- and upper-secondary schools, including those affected by the disaster as well as the 9,600 children in Sanamxay, were equipped with sufficient teaching-learning materials and school kits in a timely way. This helped the smooth resumption of all school functions, and ensured effective teaching-learning in classrooms.
- Enhanced knowledge and skills of the PESS and DESB staff, including PAs, on programme planning, management and monitoring, supervisory support for primary school teachers, effective teacher support approaches, coaching, and mentoring through specific orientations and trainings. This led to effective and timely interventions that strategically correspond to the local needs.
- Capacity of all teachers in the 26 pre-primary schools and 189 in the 47 primary schools in Sanamxay, including those affected by the flood, has been strengthened through practical in-service training and continuous support. This contributes to the improved learning performance of 465 pre-primary pupils (including 230 girls), and of 5,342 primary students (including 2,604 girls).



- The CFS also enabled and ensured children's smooth transition to return to school in time for the academic year in September 2018.
- The Education Cluster succeeded in its coordinated support at all key milestones of the emergency response and recovery work, including the rapid assessment, CFS, Back-to-School and PDNA. A strong link with Child Protection was materialised especially through the CFS.

## Results Table

Indicators	Cluster/sector 2018 Target	Cluster/sector total results	UNICEF 2018 Target	UNICEF Total results
<b>WASH</b>	6,331	7,068	6,331	7,068
<b>Nutrition</b>	6,800 (women and children)	6,772 (women and children)	6,800 (women and children)	6,772 (women and children)
<b>Education</b>	2,000	9,600	2,000	9,600
<b>Child Protection</b>	1,500	3,039 (1,550 girls and 1,489 boys)	1,500	3,039 (1,550 girls and 1,489 boys)

## Monitoring and supervision

UNICEF supported the MoLSW to develop a data collection tool and gather initial information on the status of children without parental care and those living with disabilities. The assessment reported 58 orphans and six children living with disabilities from six worst-hit villages in Sanamxay District. These children have been referred to attend CFS for basic psycho-social support by trained frontline workers, or placed in the care of extended families; while village chiefs oversee their situation.

UNICEF and government counterparts regularly visited Sanamxay District between July and December 2018. In addition, five national consultants were deployed in October-December 2018 to work closely with the Provincial and District Government to plan, monitor and supervise emergency response and recovery processes. This was an important shift from pure emergency response to a sustained district-wide approach development programming.

## E. [Communication and Visibility](#)

In the aftermath of the floods that affected Attapeu, UNICEF worked closely with the MoFA, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT) and others to publicise the emergency relief operations and to raise funds. UNICEF chaired the UN Emergency Communications Team and helped produce nine Situation Reports and four emergency bulletins.

At least 47 Facebook posts, 63 tweets and 37 Instagram posts were made; and four human interest stories were disseminated on global and regional channels. Working with the MICT, five karaoke machines were distributed after the floods for use in the CFS set up by UNICEF and partners, and disseminate important messages on protection, education, WASH, health and nutrition ('My Village' episodes).

A media visit was organised in August in Sanamxay District to showcase the efforts in response to the floods. Five media outlets were represented, and over 15 articles were generated. The communication

team also promoted hygiene and raised awareness among affected populations during the emergency, both online and offline.

Finally, UNICEF Lao Country Office facilitated the visits of the US and Australian Ambassadors and their staff to Sanamxay District, to witness how UNICEF interventions reached the most affected populations; and how UNICEF and partners were operating on the ground and engaging with the affected communities.

## Human Interest Stories:

[Lao PDR flood emergency](#)

[Emergency in Laos: staying safe with clean water and sanitation](#)

[A Haven for Happiness in Laos](#)

[Lao PDR flood emergency: How UNICEF is helping affected children and families to stay safe and healthy](#)

## Photo essays:

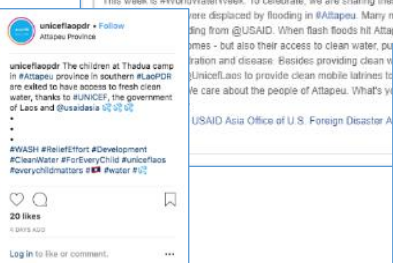
[Smiling again after the flood in Laos](#)

[Lao flood emergency](#)

## Video:

[Back to school after the floods in Attapeu](#)

## Social Media:



## Lao Media:





## **F. Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation**

With the support of a UNICEF Emergency Specialist from the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, a Joint Rapid Assessment was carried out with the Lao Government, UNFPA, IOM and the WHO on 28-29 July 2018. It provided more information on the impact of the flood on affected populations, and improve support in the immediate response planning and resource mobilisation. The assessment team, composed of 11 members from the MoH, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM, used the Common Rapid Assessment Form agreed by government and humanitarian partners in the 2018 Lao PDR Contingency Plan for floods. The assessment covered the Shelter/Non-food items (NFIs), WASH, Health & Nutrition, and Protection sectors; and to a limited extent, food security. Action plans were then developed by the respective clusters and Ministries with immediate, medium and long-term activities to respond to the early emergency and the recovery interventions.

UNICEF is also working with Provincial, District and line Ministries to document the results achieved in the emergency response; the meaningful participation of different partners; and identify the good practices and lessons learned to make recommendations to improve similar programme and response in the future.

## **G. Future Work Plan**

In the course of the early emergency response and latter recovery phases, UNICEF has established and strengthened links with Government, UN agencies, NGOs, donors and development partners to ensure that the right technical expertise and services are on the ground; and where and when they are needed the most to respond to the emergency in the most effective manner.

The current documentation of lessons learned and recommendations for smooth transitioning from emergency response to development programme will guide UNICEF to further strengthen the institutional and individual capacities to provide basic services in the health, nutrition, education, WASH and child protection sectors; incorporate disaster risk reduction in social development sectors as a cross-cutting theme; and strengthen the coordination between different implementing partners both in humanitarian and development programmes.

In 2019, UNICEF is transitioning from emergency response to sustainable rehabilitation within the child protection system. The priority of the MoLSW is to ensure family-based care and modelling community-based support to families caring for children without parental care, particularly through improved case management; and create links with livelihood development programmes to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable [families]. Interventions are designed to strengthen the child protection system at all levels, including developing national guidelines on alternative care in line with the UN Alternative Care Guidelines and continuing to build the capacities of social workers to carry out case management for all children.

## **H. Expression of Thanks**

UNICEF Lao PDR is grateful for the support provided through the global humanitarian thematic fund to contribute to the emergency response and recovery in Sanamxay District of Attapeu Province in Lao PDR on WASH, nutrition, education and child protection interventions. This contribution is crucial to mobilise additional resources from other donor Governments and development partners such as USAID/OFDA, the Australian DFAT, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Irish Aid, and UNICEF Australia. The flexibility of thematic funding support (in the ORE bracket) has also greatly contributed to the results corresponding to the programme area targets especially in the areas of documentation, planning and monitoring.