

Background to the Project

In 2011-2012 I worked as an Australian Volunteer for International Development in Laos. This is an Australian Government sponsored programme, where volunteers are embedded within organizations in order to assist their development. I was Finance and Capacity Building Officer with the Lao Disabled People's Association for a year.

Part of my work involved supporting a Wheelchair Basketball clinic that was held in the national capital in Vientiane. Project donors included the Australian Sports Outreach Programme and the World Wheelchair Express Federation. It was a great 3 day event, that culminated in a one day tournament that featured 4 teams (one of which was a women's team – the first one in Laos). However those teams have not had a chance to regularly play since that clinic in April 2012.

I am in regular contact with my friends at the Lao Disabled People's Association, and on their behalf have just launched this fundraising project during the month of April, that aims to support Wheelchair Basketball training for six months, plus a three week clinic.

The LDPA desperately need to build a league in order to create enough critical mass for the sport. Wheelchair Basketball is also a great way to build the visibility of people with disability in Laos in a proactive manner. While I was in Laos we managed to facilitate the donation of enough chairs to make ongoing practice and tournaments viable.

The Project Concept

The project concept is to have a short term Project Officer to organise training once a week for six months, to oversee the regular training of 4 teams, and to have Toufic Allouche (*International Wheelchair Basketball Federation Classification Officer Asia/Oceania*) go back to Laos for 15 days to do both Wheelchair Basketball training and capacity building for key players so they can continue to build a league. Touffic has discounted his fees hugely as a donation to the project.



Player being interviewed for TV news – a breakthrough in the visibility of athletic, achieving People with Disability in Laos.



The women's team is ecstatic as they reach the finals play off, coached by Toufic Allouche.

What Global Giving will Give

The page featuring our project will be up on the web for one month. In that one month we need to raise the money required from a minimum of 40 separate donors in order for the LDPA to become a lifetime partner of Global Giving, which means the LDPA can use their international support again for other projects.

If we reach the initial target of \$5000, we will then have additional time to raise the extra money needed to run our Wheelchair Basketball project properly - plus any other project we want to (subject to vetting by Global Giving) into the future. This will then open up pretty exciting possibilities for the LDPA.

PROJECT BUDGET

Item	Amount (USD)	Units	Total
Sports Officer - per month	300	6	1800
Oncosts - motorcycle fuel, admin, phone per month	200	6	1200
WC basketball coach Touffic Allouche - daily discounted rate	150	14	2100
Touffic - airfares from nearby country (he will add on to other training clinic to save \$ for us)	500	1	500
Training - weekly sessions - court hire	30	20	600
Refreshment	100	6	600
Training - during clinic - fuel contribution to players @ \$5 each per session round trip	60	20	1200
Training - during clinic - fuel contribution to players @ \$5 each per session round trip	60	12	720
Competition - one day comp to showcase sport to local high schools	800	1	800
Publicity	300	1	300
			9820



Mr Singkham Takounphak, Ms Lynda Worthaisong (centre) and wheelchair basketball players pose for a photo at the National Rehabilitation Centre.

Wheelchair basketball players compete in Vientiane

**Sangkomsay
Bubphanouvong**

The Lao Disabled People's Association held a friendly wheelchair basketball competition at the National Rehabilitation Centre on Thursday.

The competition was funded by the Australian Sports Outreach Programme and supported by the World Wheelchair Express Foundation, with the aim of building camaraderie and esteem among the players, as well as further developing their skills.

Before the competition took place, the players took part in a two day coaching clinic run by a wheelchair basketball specialist from Lebanon, Mr

Toufic Allouche. He shared his experiences with the players, sharing tips and advice and running them through some training drills to sharpen their skills for the day.

The competition itself was attended by quite a crowd, including dignitaries, donors and secondary school students.

Australian Ambassador to Laos Ms Lynda Worthaisong, Disabled People's Association Vice President Mr Singkham Takounphak, Express Foundation President Mr Steve Elefson and students from Vientiane Secondary School and Phiavath Secondary School were on hand to cheer on the players.

Before the match took place, Mr Singkham presented

certificates of appreciation to Ms Worthaisong and Mr Elefson on behalf of the Lao Disabled People's Association, thanking them for their generous support.

Ms Worthaisong said she was pleased the Australian Sports Outreach Programme was able to support the association.

She encouraged all the athletes to compete to the best of their abilities, saying that sport was for both able bodied and disabled athletes alike, and everyone could enjoy playing sport to keep fit.

The Lao wheelchair basketball team faced off against the Thai team in a friendly match in July last year and hope to do so again at some stage soon.

Clip from The Vientiane Times, April 2012

This is an example of the type of positive publicity we can generate from our work. We need to build on these achievements.

What I am asking for from you is;

For you to consider financially supporting this project;

For you to forward information to your networks to support this project - all I am looking for is small amounts from lots of people;

For you to post this project on your Facebook page, with a request for all your friends to donate \$5 each towards the project (or whatever they can afford).

Thank you – and I hope you choose to become a partner in our quest to make Wheelchair Basketball a feature of the sporting landscape of Laos.

Beverley Jefferson, on behalf of the LDPA