

*August 2023*

The Asian Mission Team was renamed the Lao Mission Team with the members now focused on Laos. The members of the Team are:

So far, the Team had been working with Huayjod Primary, Namhodthai Primary and Danthin Secondary. Some time ago in 2022, Pana Primary was introduced to the Team; in late 2022, we were asked if we could also partner Yan Tai.

Pana and Yan Tai serve a predominantly children from the Lahu tribe and are located more upland, We also work closely with Fr Bounty who, as parish priest, cover a wide area, with schools like Pana and Yan Tai within his parish boundary. Many of the children are his parishioners.



This visit was made as countries began to reopen borders after the Covid pandemic. Measures such as masks, vaccination certificates remained in force. However, as we had only been in contact through Zoom, Whatsapp videos and messages, we looked forward to face-to-face contacts again and to review onsite, the progress made on the various projects that were agreed upon during the period of border closure.

This visit was undertaken by Shu Quo,  
Gerry Chee & Maria Swee





The toilet at Namhodthai Pr School in disrepair; Children have no other toilet facilities. The school building is also in a sad state: leaking roof, broken walls...

## Educational field Trip 25 -27 January 2023

Danthin teachers went over to Chiangrai to visit Schools and educational institutions to observe and learn about teaching methodologies and School sustainability projects: they were especially interested at the Border Patrol Police School where they noted that agriculture was a big part of the school's activity. There, they asked many questions about what and how they started and kept the agriculture going. They also visited the Huawiang School and IJ School, Chiangkhong.

Sr Woranuch worked hard with the Danthin to ensure that the Field Trip was successfully carried out.



At the Police Patrol School



## Chiangkhong Community visits Laos on 23 March 2023

The Chiangkhong community, ever supportive of the Mission to Laos visited the Christian community at St Joseph Church in Pana (near Pana School) Fr Bounty accompanied the Sisters on this trip. They met the head of the village who was a teacher in Pana for nearly 30 years. He is a Christian.

Chiangkhong Community visits St Joseph in Pana



## Trip to Laos 7 to 12 May 2023

This trip was to assess the progress of the projects proposed during the last visit and to visit Yan Tai Primary School. It was also proposed to have teaching practice in Danthin Secondary School to assess the level of English. This would help us when we make preparations to conduct English Courses for Danthin teachers.

Team members Shu Quo and Maria Swee made the trip together with volunteers, Gerry Chee, Pauline Chan, Theresa Pee and Agnes Chew. Dr Benjaporn (Thailand) was our translator.



## Pana Primary School

### Project Updates

1. Construction of water trough completed in 1/2/23.
2. Two new toilets for girls
3. Two toilets repaired for boys
4. Leaking roof of staff room repaired.



New toilets at Pana



New water trough at Pana

### Requests

1. Tiling of five classrooms
2. Tiling of walkway
3. Roof repair for two classrooms
4. Teaching materials for the nursery which serves 15 pupils.

### Remarks

1. Lunch project for children can wait as there is no kitchen
2. Need to seek approval from ministry for teacher-training. Zoom sessions may be possible as there is WiFi and there are computers in the school.
3. The students really appreciate the sports equipment that the Lao team brought up in September last year.





Teachers showing us their vegetable garden, started as a follow-up to their educational field trip

## DANTHIN SECONDARY

### Project Updates

1. Educational field trip for 15 teachers to Thailand in Jan 2023.
2. Started vegetable garden in the school compound, an initiative after the educational field trip
3. New methods of teaching eg group work.

Danthin Update: Mr Omkaew, the active and passionate Principal and our ardent collaborator succumbed to this illness on 31 October 2022. Our thoughts are with his family, the students and staff of the school. They have lost a tireless principal who worked to upgrade the school constantly in this remote area.



### Requests

1. Computer lab & WiFi
2. Roof repair

### Remarks

1. Teachers who went on the Edu field trip will share with teachers in Huayjod on what they have learned

In addition, we had the special opportunity to observe two English lessons at Danthin , one in grade 12 and one grade 9.

Members of the team conducted two lessons the next day for the same two classes.

Both lesson observations and lessons conducted by the team went well and met the objectives of having a better understanding of their standard of English and also to conduct lesson demonstrations.



Teresa actively carrying out an English lesson

## HUAYJOD PRIMARY

### Project Updates

1. On-going lunch project. Three days a week. Eggs, noodles or vegetable soup. Teachers reported that children's health has improved.
2. Construction of kitchen is 50% completed. Left with doors and electrical source.
3. Children prefer the bamboo containers to bring glutinous rice to school rather than the plastic bags they used before.
4. Vegetable garden all year round attended to by teachers & students. This is as a result of access to water. Harvest provides vegetables for their lunch.

### Requests

1. Budget to buy supplementary books
2. Construction of a room to be used as a library
3. Installation of fans for five classrooms
4. Educational trip for five teachers. Possible dates- June or August 2023.





## Yan Tai Primary School

It was the hottest day (35°C) of our visit when we made our way to Yan Tai Primary School in a pick-up over bumpy roads with lots of potholes!

### Project Updates

No update as this is a new partner school.

### Requests

1. Budget to complete windows of three classrooms .
2. Construction of a well as there's no water from the mountains during the dry seasons. There is no water for the existing four toilets too.

### Remarks

The school will work on budgets for the windows of the three classrooms and construction of a well.

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### Visit of May 2023

Agnes Chew: The smiling faces of the children speak volumes of their simplicity. Their look of contentment is their hunger for learning and a desire for something better. The aspirations of the leaders in the school show how much they want for their children's learning environment and well-being for a better tomorrow. While it's a privilege for us to be brought together, I feel we need to understand the needs of both leaders and children better. Most of all, we need to listen to the voices of the children, the true recipients of our "gifts" for brighter days ahead.





Theresa teaching in Danthin

The IJ Mission to Laos visited one secondary and three primary schools this May. During the six-day/five-night trip, the senses of sight and sound were awakened. It was an eye-opener to the many things often taken for granted and to new things that one would not have known if not for the trip.

In observing the year nine and year twelve English classes, thoughts came to mind that although these teachers participated in the educational field trip in Thailand in January 2023, they need more understanding in the approaches of pedagogy and andragogy, for teaching and learning. Whether it is feasible to continue working in partnership with these schools, I have my concerns. I believe the building of trust is the key. There is a need for funding towards building infrastructure for a better teaching and learning environment. That being said, a sustainable programme looks possible for the two catholic centres run by the two priests in Thailand, as these children are in a stable and settled environment.

#### Teaching experience

Teaching the year nine class in Danthin school was an enjoyable experience. Students were responsive and engaged. From an educational perspective, their seemingly passive learning attitude is due to their lack of understanding of the medium of instruction, viz., English. The inability of the teacher to engage students in utilising English more freely in expression and function application, apart from teaching in rote learning, is likely to be one factor in students' low proficiency in English.



Gerry: ... For me, it was a truly productive visit to the Laotian schools and especially heartwarming to see the 3 projects; Fr Paul & Fr Sunday's mission for the neglected children plus Fr Bounty's ambitious dream to build such a huge church especially as he appears to be a one man show & has no financial backing or resources like golf tournaments/dinners / charity events to raise funds. Their faith is so admirable



St Paul Church: on going construnction undertaken by Fr Bounty. As Gerry says, it is Fr Bounty”s Ambitious dream!

*“The gifts given to you are for others*



Blessed Nicolas Barre

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