**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Friends Without A Border

Friends Without A Border (FWAB) currently supports a single undertaking, Lao Friends Hospital for Children (LFHC), a pediatric hospital in Luang Prabang, Lao People’s Democratic Republic.  Accordingly, FWAB’s strategic plan focuses on the operations and development of LFHC.

**Objective 1: Primary Objective**

Build strong and sustainable Lao medical and administration teams at Lao Friends Hospital for Children by continuing/enhancing the training of our Lao staff to provide compassionate, quality medical care in a low-resource setting for children under 15 years old with the objective of gradually turning over the management of LFHC to the Lao staff and completing the turnover by the year 2030.

**Extend current 10-year MOU expiring in 2024**

Ministry of Health, Luang Prabang Provincial Health Department and FWAB / LFHC agreed in a meeting in February 2022 to extend the current Memo of Understanding (MOU) until 2030. The background is that the Pandemic caused difficulties in several of the prioritized areas of the project, due to travel restrictions.

Additionally, FWAB recognized that there was more training necessary at the hospital and within the community which would not be completed in the original 10-year time frame (the Ministry will only sign 10-year MOU’s).

The “Prevention of Malnutrition” project was postponed; a Director of Prevention arrived in September 2022 to complete the final piece of our quality care/ training/ prevention commitment in our original MOU.

Improving quality of Health Care on district level (District Hospitals and Health Clinics) in Luang Prabang Province has also recently started again.

Implement new quality control measures as described below.

Continue to promote Lao clinicians and administrators until hospital is completely Lao managed by 2030.

Look for additional and independent funding sources which will be sustainable after 2030.

**Training program specifics**

LFHC continues an extensive internal education program, which means all staff members will have one day of training within their professional needs every week. In addition, LFHC will offer morning teaching sessions 4 days/week and English classes 2 hours /week.

The external education provided by LFHC consists of several activities: LFHC will have continuously 2 Pediatric Residents from the national medical school’s Pediatric Program, staying for 2 months each. In 2023 LFHC will extend the collaboration with the Pediatric Program and train all second year interns in Pediatrics for one year. This second year will focus on Pediatric Intensive Care, Neonatology and Nutrition.

LFHC will continue to train Nurse, Midwives and Medical Assistant students at LFHC.

The reactivated program of improving quality care at District level will include several training activities. The amount and content will be planned in collaboration with the Provincial Health Department.

**Quality control strategies**

Quality improvement and quality control are central topics in all development work done at LFHC.  This work will:

* Provide a venue for clinical and non-clinical staff to process and analyze data and use these for decision-making and planning more development in LFHC.
* Generate stream of knowledge through evidenced-based practices which can be shared within LFHC and to wider institutions in Laos.
* Utilize all data generated to influence policymaking and creation of local and national guidelines and protocols, which improves clinical care services being provided.
* Feed all data collected at LFHC to the national data collection system (DHIS2).

**Lao promotion strategy**

Promoting a strong Lao leadership is essential to give the best conditions for sustained high-quality care after the planned turnover in 2030. Training and developing leadership is a long-term project, and has been given high priority since early 2022. The first Lao (Nursing) Director was appointed in February, as well as 6 Medical Managers, 6 Nursing Managers and 2 Administrative Managers. All Lao leaders have received internal and external Management training.

Besides promoting individuals for future leaders, LFHC also considers it to be essential to create a strong leadership structure, which is not dependent on specific individuals. LFHC changed the structure of its Executive Team (which by now consists of 7 Lao and 6 expat members) to meet internal and external challenges in an agile and dynamic way.

**Compassionate care training**

Our vision is to provide Compassionate Care to all patients and their families coming in contact with LFHC. This needs to be re-emphasized on a regular basis. As LFHC has grown in the last years with new staff members, LFHC will provide a half-day training in Compassionate Care for every staff member working at LFHC, focusing on their own experiences of being Compassionate and what this means in their daily work.

**Official HAU opening for care enhancement**

In July 2022, LFHC opened an Intensive Care/ High Acuity Unit, with 4-5 beds. During the first three months the unit had at least 3 patients continuously. LFHC receives children from all provinces in northern Laos. Before opening the unit, 8 nurses were sent to Vientiane for training in Pediatric Intensive Care. As Intensive Care requires a high number of well-educated nurses and doctors, there will a continuous focus on training.

**Objective 2: Reducing Mortality Rate**

Help the country of Laos reduce their child mortality rate by training local clinics/ clinicians to provide quality medical care at their facilities, as well as training clinicians from outside of LFHC and developing a prevention program focusing on the first 1000 days of a child's life.

**Outside training specifics**

Focus on outside trainings will be on improving quality of care at Districts Hospitals and Health Clinics. The training performed by LFHC during early 2022 is now evaluated by a survey and exam of all participants from the District Hospitals.

LFHC has also prepared a questionnaire for clinical and administrative staff at District Hospitals, to find out what kind of support they get at the moment, and what they consider they would need in future to help LFHC identify how to provide support and training in an efficient way. This draft survey has been sent to Provincial Health Department and LFHC is waiting for confirmation to use it. LFHC will also survey patients to assess why families from other districts prefer coming all the way to LFHC, instead of going to the closest Health Clinic or District Hospital, where most of the cases should receive adequate treatment.

**Training at LFHC for external clinicians**

Ministry of Health together with UNICEF are implementing a 5-day training program for doctors and nurses from all Provincial Hospitals in the country, as well as from the three big pediatric hospitals in Vientiane, on inpatient care of children with severe acute malnutrition. LFHC will host this training, and two out of four facilitators will be staff members of LFHC. The first 5-day training will take place in November 2022, and additional 2 or 3 trainings are planned for early 2023.

**Prevention program and basic thinking behind 1000-day program**

Malnutrition is still a major attributing factor to child mortality in northern Laos. Prevention of malnutrition is complex, and existing evidence underlines two aspects as being crucial in any prevention work:

* The program needs to be adapted to the local circumstances, and close collaboration with stakeholders on all levels (national, provincial and district) is necessary.
* Malnutrition in children begins in uteri and many factors contributing to malnutrition can be identified already during pregnancy. For this reason, antenatal work must be part of any prevention program.
* Globally, the concept of “The first 1000 days” has been the base of malnutrition in countries comparable to Laos. This approach includes prenatal work (270 days of pregnancy) and the first two years of life (730 days).
* The LFHC Director of Prevention has arrived in Luang Prabang will start in October 2022. She will develop the LFHC program and will mentor and be supported by a Lao Project Manager. The prevention program will complete our original commitment to complete a quality care/training hospital with a community prevention component.

**Objective 3: Integration**

Continue to build relations with the Ministry of Health and the Luang Prabang Provincial Health Department, in order to integrate LFHC training programs, creating fluidity among clinical settings.

After the Pandemic, the Lao Ministry of Health has implemented major changes both within the organization of the Health Sector, as well as the structure and licensing of health profession educations. LFHC has built up a close collaboration both with the Ministry of Health and Luang Prabang Provincial Health Department in the last years. LFHC will participate in meetings and discussions on the future structure of the health system in Laos.

LFHC also has a close collaboration with the University of Health Sciences and the three major pediatric hospitals in Vientiane. During 2021, LFHC has been active in promoting discussions between these hospitals to align the guidelines with each other and to facilitate work when staff members or students move between the different hospitals. LFHC will continue this collaboration.

We believe that the quality of pediatric care in Laos also has improved due to these discussions.