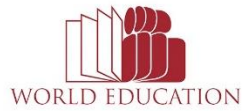




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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Case Study: Chanh and her journey to communicate!



“Seeing my girl getting along with other children who have similar difficulties really warms my heart that she is not alone anymore. More importantly, she could enjoy the class and learn Lao sign language to enable her to communicate with others.”

- Chanh’s mother, USAID Okard beneficiary

Chanh is a lively 12 year-old girl despite being born unable to hear. Growing up in Xayphouthong district, Savannakhet province with difficulties hearing and communicating created many challenges to fully participate in day to day life, such as interacting with friends and going to school. Only her family could understand and communicate with her. Once identified by the Okard Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) team, Chanh was referred to the Savannakhet Provincial Hospital to assess her hearing to see how she could be supported, however, doctors confirmed a hearing aid would not help her as she was deaf.

Despite hearing difficulties, Chanh has a lot of passion to learn and really wanted to go to school like her siblings and peers in the village. With limited trained teachers able to support children with sign language, the District Labor and Social Welfare Office and District Education and Sports Office were challenged to find a school at the district and provincial levels. With the support of the CBID team, they decided to explore other solutions so she could go to school. Hands of Hope (HoH) Center in Vientiane specializing in supporting children with hearing impairments was one of the options, but this was a big decision for her family to make if Chanh had to move away from home.

Chanh and her parents, supported by the CBID team, traveled to Vientiane Capital to visit the Hands of Hope Center to see if it would be the right place for her to learn. Chanh, her parents, and the staff at the Hands of Hope agreed and Chanh started school on June 6, 2022.

During her time with HoH, Chanh enjoys learning Lao sign language helping her connect and interact with people. She has made many friends and has such a fun time there. At first, her parents were quite worried about her living far away from her family on her own, but after seeing how much she has grown and developed, her parents were so happy and grateful for the opportunity and support. Chanh's parents, along with the CBID team, regularly visit her and continue to enjoy seeing the positive progress of her communication skills and foremost that she is really happy to stay with HoH.

“Seeing the good progress of Chanh really fascinated me. Being her CBID Facilitator, as well as having a daughter myself, I could not be happier that Chanh can now communicate with other people besides her family and yet gaining knowledge about Lao sign language and other lessons, which she can use in the future. More importantly, she does not feel lonely anymore because she now has a lot of friends at the HoH center.”

- Sengsouli, ARMI CBID Facilitator

Photo 1: The CBID team met with Chanh first time

Photo 2: Chanh got her hearing assessment at Savannakhet Provincial Hospital

Photo series 3: Chanh during her time with HoH