

Mike Fennema
Country Consultant
mfennema@worldrenew.net

Marrion Omanyo
Program Advisor
momanyo@worldrenew.net

World Renew Canada
3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8
1-800-730-3490
Fax: 905-336-8344

World Renew US
1700 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
1-800-552-7972
Fax: 616-224-8060

worldrenew.net/laos
@worldrenew_laos

Give all your worries to Him because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

The Pigs of Phouhin

A Story of Transformation



by **Mike Fennema**
Country Consultant
Laos Team

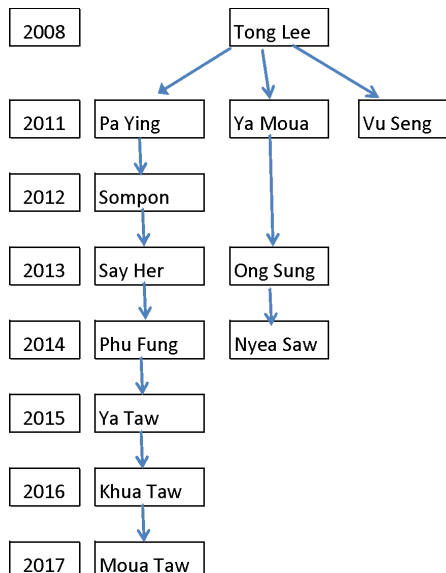
In our December 2013 newsletter, we shared the story of Mr. Tong Lee and his wife, whose family was the first in the village of Phouhin to receive female pigs and training in improved approaches to pig-raising from World Renew.

The Tong family raised their pigs well and have benefited greatly. They keep about half the pigs they raise for home consumption thus greatly improving their family's nutrition. They have used their increased income from selling piglets as a starting point for making significant improvements in their quality of life. Over time, Mr. Tong has become an active member in his community, taking on the roles of village veterinarian as well as health volunteer. He even won an award for being the most active health volunteer in a cluster of villages.

But the story of pigs in Phouhin does not end there.

Last month, I had an opportunity to meet again with Mr. Tong Lee and his wife and a number of other villagers and we reflected on the broader community-level impact of pig-raising. Back in 2008, World Renew supported Tong Lee and his family with two female pigs with the promise that, if possible, he would turn around and pass a female piglet on to other families as identified by the Village Development Committee. We called this idea a "pig bank" and during our visit in November, we talked about how that worked over the course of the last 9 years.

With the gathered villagers, we made a drawing of how the pig bank grew over time.



A total of 12 families had the opportunity to begin raising pigs, all from the original two pigs that the project provided. And according to the villagers at our meeting, eight of the twelve recipient families are still raising and benefiting from pig raising on a regular basis. These are very encouraging results for a small financial outlay; providing two grown sows and training in pig-raising.

And we have good ideas about how to better those outcomes in the future.

Project staff had provided training and input over the last nine years in the use of a few basic changes to the traditional pig-raising done by villagers here. Recommendations included keeping pigs penned rather than allowing them to freely roam the village and forest; improved feeding; provision of 24/7 water access; and the use of vaccinations.

Progress was made on the first recommendation, but there was limited progress in the other areas, especially the provision of water and the following of a recommended vaccination schedule. So together with project staff we will continue to explore ideas and approaches that can increase the impact of our work. Development is an ongoing process and does not often go according to the original project plans and concepts.



World Renew Laos and Fennema Family Recent and Upcoming Events

- At the end of September, Marrion Omanyo, who works with World Renew as a project advisor in Phongsaly, had a motorbike accident while on her way to a village and she broke her foot. After an operation in Thailand to put a pin in, she is now back in Kenya with an expected recovery of three months before she can be mobile enough to return to work in Laos around the middle of January. Her Connections Tour had to be cancelled.
- In November, Dr. Tom Post, the Asia Regional Team Leader for World Renew, traveled with Mike to visit the project in Phongsaly. Together we worked with some of the project staff to use a recently-developed water-testing kit for identifying e-coli bacteria that has been specifically designed for use in remote communities.
- 2018 is going to be a busy year. Our 5 year Memorandum of Understanding to work in Phongsaly ends in December 2018, and so we need to plan for the next 5 years. The MOU is the agreement that we sign with the ministry after discussion and agreement with the villages, district, province and ministry officials. This agreement outlines the details of what we will implement, as well as the goals and who is responsible for what. There are many steps involved, including determining where exactly we will continue to work. This will involve an extensive collection of information and ideas that will be used to write up proposals to send to donors as well as to the government to get approval.
- Matthew participated in a two day basketball tournament in Saigon, Vietnam in early November. We met him at the airport upon the team's return and his coach said "Matthew really stepped up and showed his skills as a leader on the team". He was named MVP from his team.
- Monica has settled into university life and is doing very well finding a balance between her studies, community service to the homeless, and working at the canteen.
- Maria and Matthew participated in a Swimvitational Meet in Phnom Penh Cambodia in mid-November, breaking a number of personal bests in various events.

What's that for?

Take a close look at this photo. What could this item be used for?

Don't hesitate or be shy, but send your best guess to Mike at fivemfamily@gmail.com.

The mystery will be revealed in the next newsletter!



Mystery Revealed

Your Guesses were:

- A type of cigar
- A handle for something.
- Part of a hand grenade
- A small land mine



And the correct answer is: a bartender's tool! In many of the villages where we work it's a tradition for the village leader to serve a small glass of locally-made rice alcohol to guests before dinner, making a short speech to encourage the visitors. In one village, I saw this little device affixed to an old beer bottle which was filled with the rice alcohol.

