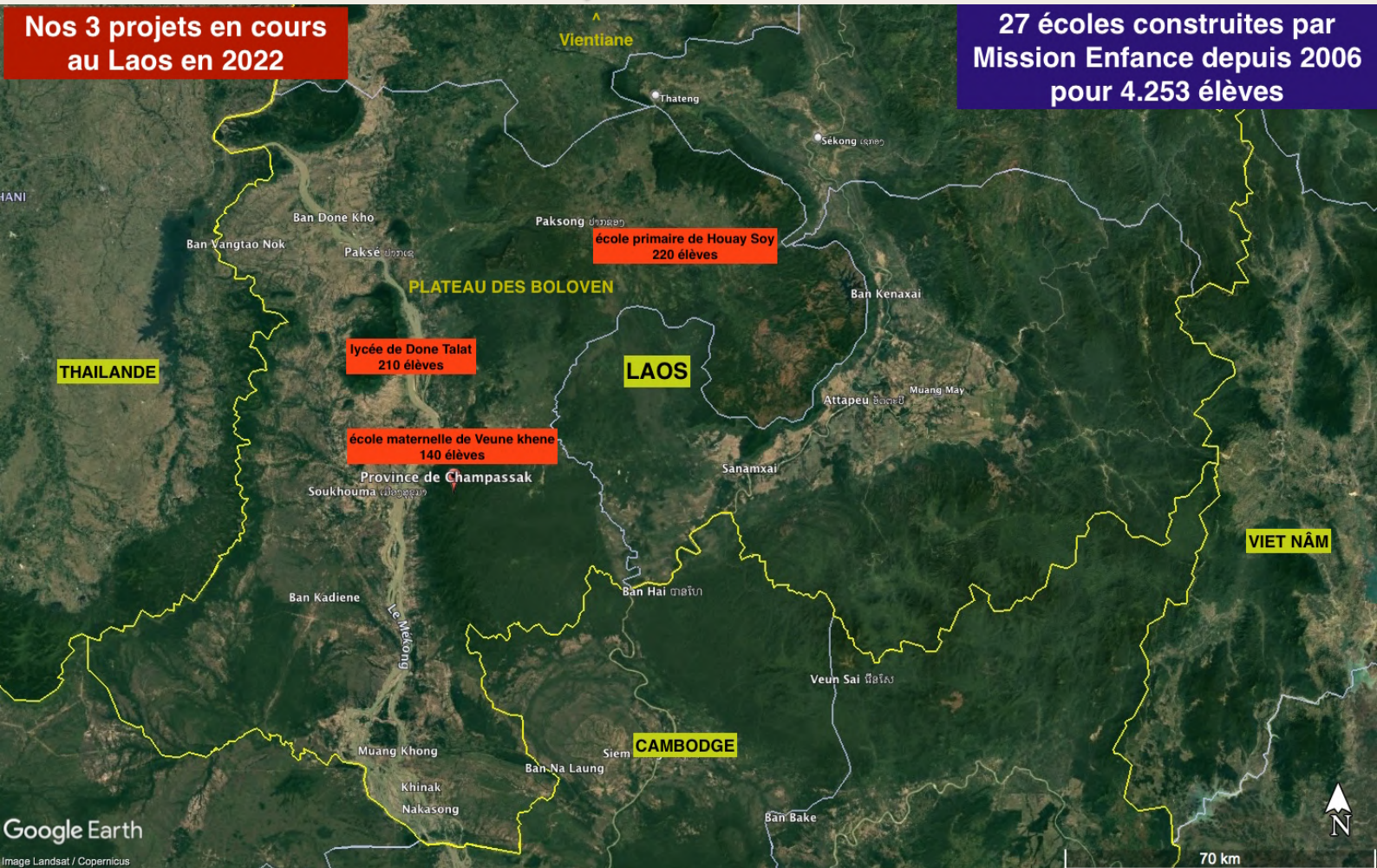




## Our experience in Laos

**Nos 3 projets en cours  
au Laos en 2022**

**27 écoles construites par  
Mission Enfance depuis 2006  
pour 4.253 élèves**



Laos is considered one of the poorest countries in the world. The average income of its inhabitants is \$500 per year.

In 1975, the country became the People's Democratic Republic (PDR). The government's policy is still inspired by the single party, but is opening up to the market economy. It is a landlocked region (no access to the sea) with few natural resources, except for important hydraulic resources (the Mekong) and a protected natural area. Laos, a country whose population is 85% peasant, is also the 3rd largest producer of opium in the world, and is one of the three countries in the Golden Triangle (with Thailand and Burma). From a so-called forgotten and isolated region until recently, Laos is now attracting many investors from China, Vietnam, but also from France (which seems to be back in favour) and Germany. The great fear of the Laotians is that they will be swallowed up by Vietnam and China. The latter has built 50 dams in Laos (one of which collapsed in September 2018, drowning several villages, causing the death of 150 people). 400 kilometres of railway are being built in Laos as part of the "New Silk Roads" programme.

This railway is intended to link China to Thailand, but it is beginning to make the Laotians cringe as the Chinese are dispossessing them of 100 metres on each side of the tracks. Neighbouring Thailand also plays a major role in the country's economy. The economic situation in Thailand is changing rapidly and the



Laotians, who are rather nonchalant, fear the Vietnamese takeover of land and trade in the south of their country. Dozens of hectares of forest are cleared every day by the Vietnamese on the Boloven Plateau to plant rubber trees, which is bound to have erosive consequences on the Laotian soil in the medium term.

As in Vietnam, there is great ethnic diversity, with 80 ethnic minorities making up 33% of the population. They have little access to education. The level of education in this country is very low and the material conditions of the schools are disastrous (insufficient teacher training, very low salaries for teachers, lack of teaching materials etc.).

Mission Enfance has been working since 2006, in the South of the country, in Champasak Province, the third most populated region of the country with 700,000 inhabitants (10% of the total population of Laos), where it has rehabilitated and/or built 23 schools, provided school and hygiene kits to the pupils and built wells on the Boloven Plateau, mainly for ethnic minorities. Its action is led locally by Mrs. Bounleua Chaysinh, a Laotian who returned to her country in 1989 after 14 years of exile in France. She has been working voluntarily with Mission Enfance since 2006.

The two years of the Covid 19 pandemic cruelly affected the Laotian population. The country has been hermetically sealed since March 2020 and the inhabitants confined almost continuously for two years. Schools have been operating intermittently for the past two years, with no distance learning due to lack of resources and especially electricity in the villages. The markets being closed, the farmers could not sell their harvests, impoverishing a little more a population among the most fragile of the world. In this context, Mission Enfance has continued to build schools and distribute food aid to students and families.

Each of our projects in Laos is carried out by Bounleua Chaysinh and her team.

