

## **Vientiane International School Expands Learning Opportunities in Laos with the Campus Gateway Project.**

Vientiane International School (VIS) campus improvement project, including an Auditorium, a Gymnasium, and new social areas have been officially opened to serve VIS and local communities.

**Vientiane, 25 February 2023** – VIS celebrated their campus' new buildings with a Grand Opening event on February 25 at their school campus. They welcomed their friends and partners as well as Lao PDR government representatives, local community leaders, the diplomatic community, and international organizations to a momentous ceremony where the student performances, speeches, and art work were at the center.

Her Excellency Dr. Sisouk Vongvichit, Vice Minister of Education and Sports, His Excellency Dr. Peter Haymond, US Ambassador to Lao PDR, and Ms. Elsa Donohue, VIS Head of School, addressed in their speeches the importance of enabling learning spaces for the students' social, emotional, and academic development, and highlighted the opportunities that these new buildings offer for creating partnerships and strong relationships with extended communities in Laos. They all celebrated the role of VIS in integrating Lao culture into their diverse and inclusive community of learners.

After more than 30 years serving in Laos, VIS continues to improve its offering with a campus expansion. The partners involved in this project are: **BFL** (Project Funder), **Lao Consulting Group** (Technical Design and Project Management); **Comin Asia** (MEP Design Consultants); and **Khamphay Sana Group** (Civil and Architectural contractor), all of whom helped to bring to life the design vision of **EIW Architects** (Design Consultants from Perth).

The efforts of this multidisciplinary team, together with years of strategic planning, set the ground for building the new VIS facilities without impacting the school's operations, budget, or school fees.

In a blend of traditional Laos architectural style with modern, sustainable design, the new VIS facilities offer:

- A new multipurpose Performing Arts Center with a capacity of 366 pax. Retractable seats make the space versatile for events and community gatherings;
- An indoor Gymnasium with 2 full-size basketball courts, integrated into the sports hub (pool and soccer field);
- A modern administration building and community areas.

### **We give back to Laos**

"The estimated project investment is \$8 million. About 75% of this expenditure was directed through local companies as far as possible, with materials only being imported where necessary. We made sure to foster the local economy and give back to Lao

communities as much as we could,” Vivien Brelsford, VIS Finance and Operations Manager, said.

VIS plans to involve the local community through initiatives such as:

- The possible establishment of a “Community Garden” which would provide access to local members of the community to learn about urban agriculture options
- A venue for hosting more conferences, performances, and sporting events for local community projects. VIS already supported local groups such as the Lao Parra-swimming Foundation.

“The VIS new facilities will enable novel spaces that expand the learning opportunities of our students and local communities. The Campus Gateway Project responds to the findings and recommendations of a facilities review and space utilization analysis conducted by Perkins Eastman in 2018. We moved from a sports-centered campus to a responsive building that incorporates the arts and sustainability principles into an enhanced sports hub. Our campus improvement help us fulfill our school’s mission and vision: developing our learners' unique potential while leading the way toward a sustainable future.”, stated the Head of School, Mrs. Elsa Donohue.

VIS aims to work with the United Nations (UN) to have the site designated as a “place of refuge” for the local community in the event of a major disaster.